Dancing in the Temple of the Sun

Dance and Dancers

OCTOBER 1959

This month's full ballet guide

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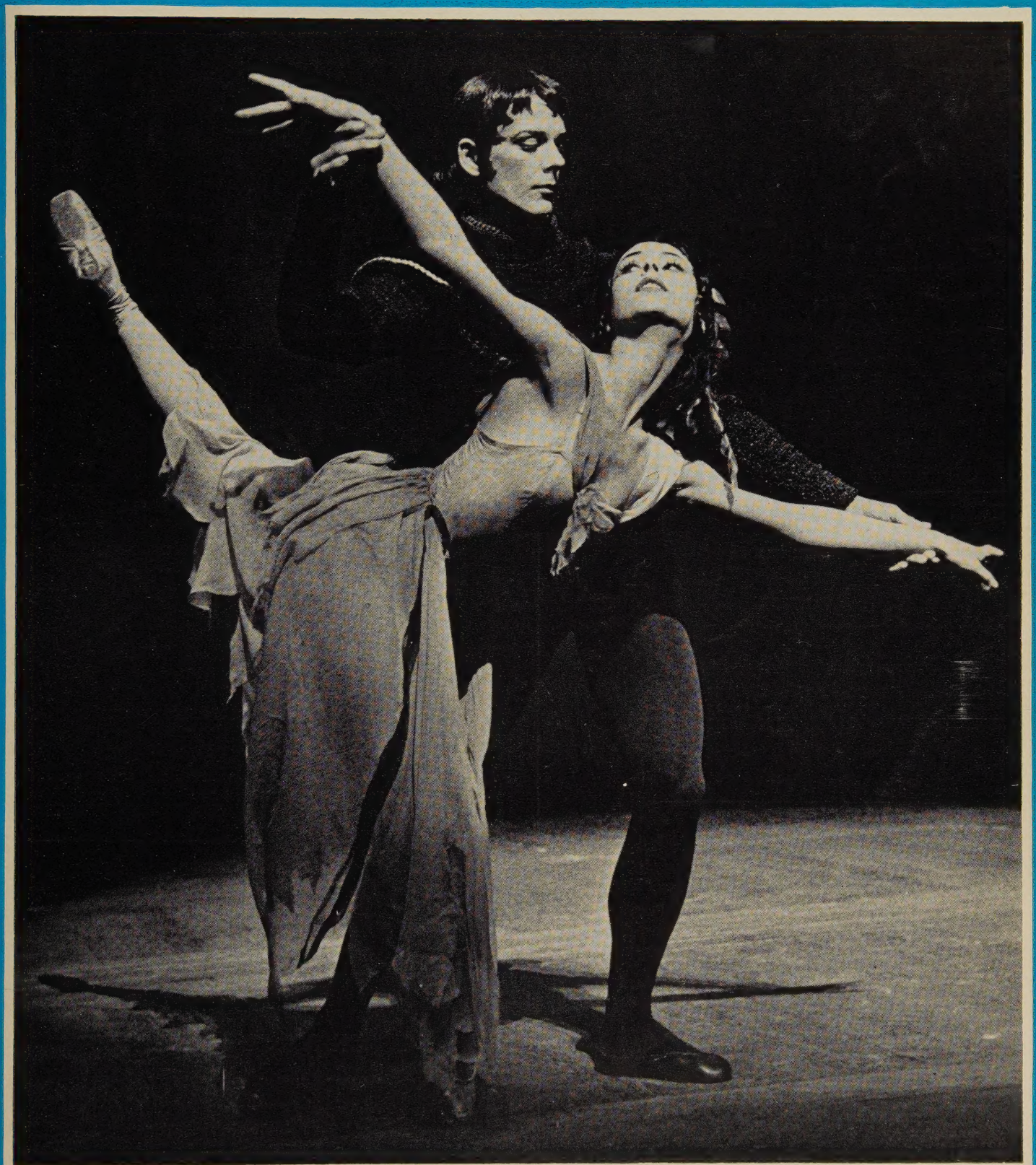
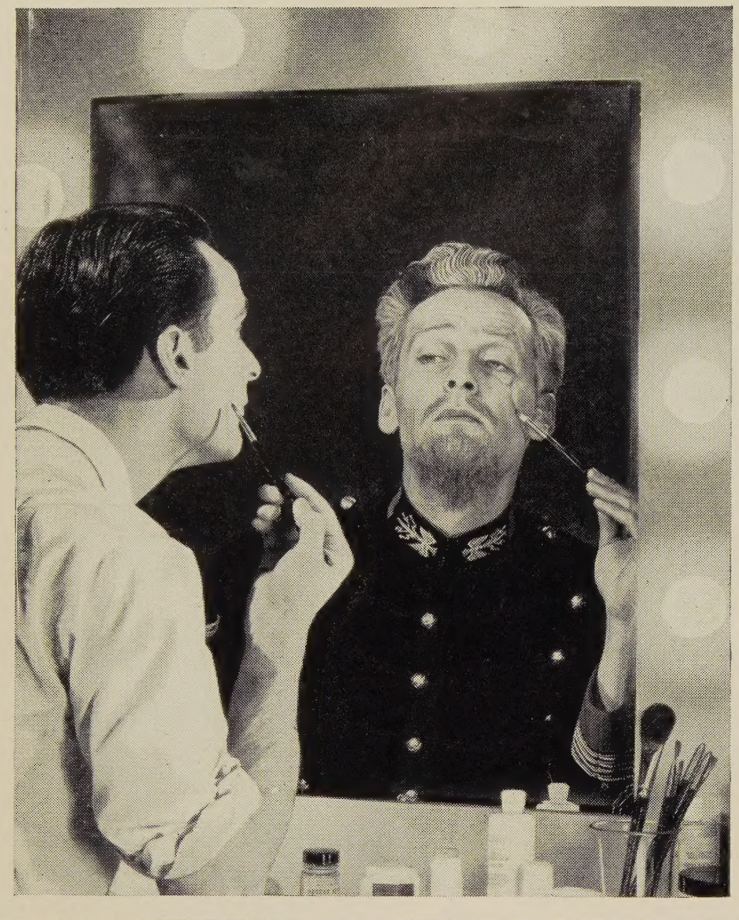


GEORGINA PARKINSON and DONALD MACLEARY

of the Royal Ballet, in Andree Howard's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* at Covent Garden



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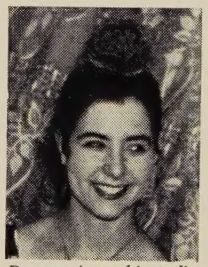

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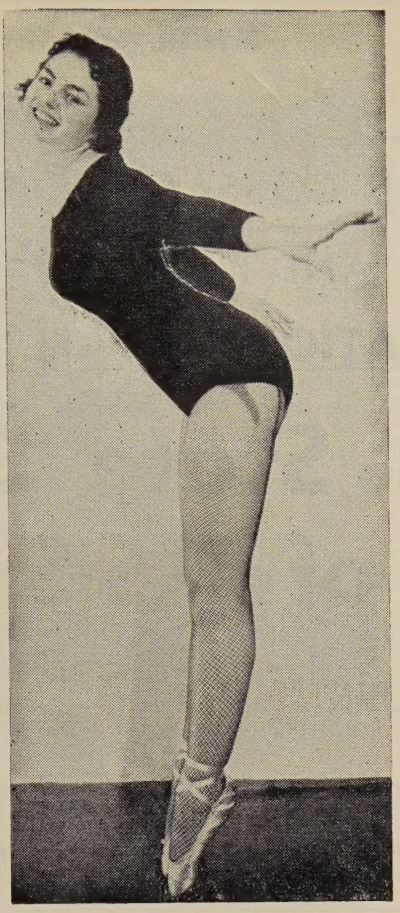

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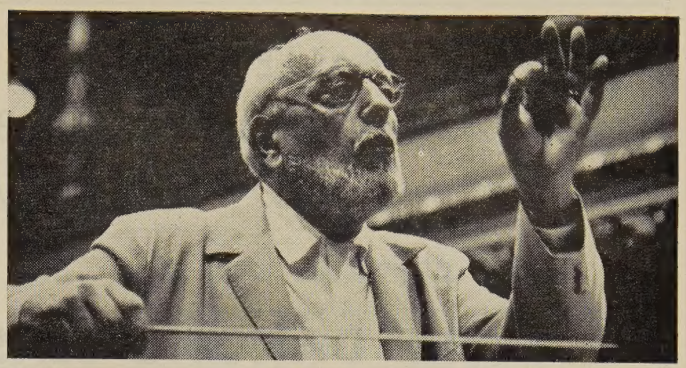

Tchaikovsky was perhaps only the second composer to write ballet music which really meant something as music. The Sleeping Beauty is a fine example of this.

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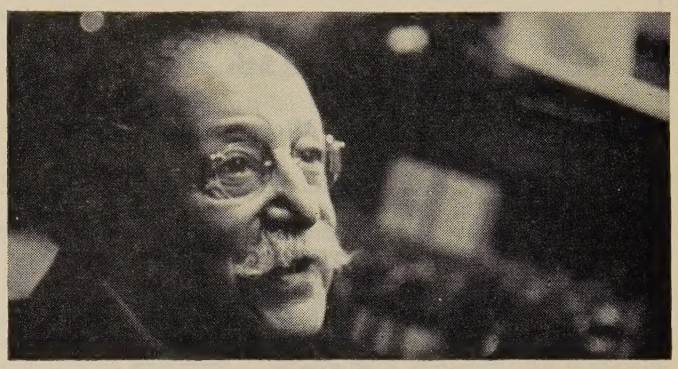

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Personality of the Month

JEAN ROSENTHAL

"LIGHT is the most important plastic medium on the stage. . . . Without its unifying power our eyes would be able to perceive what objects were but not what they expressed. . . . What can give us this sublime unity which is capable of uplifting us? Light! . . . Light and light alone, quite apart from its subsidiary importance in illuminating a dark stage, has the greatest plastic power, for it is subject to a minimum of conventions and so is able to reveal vividly in its most expressive form the eternal fluctuating appearance of a phenomenal world." This quotation from *Die Musik und die Inscenierung*, published in 1895, is but a fragment of the important words written by the greatest master of lighting the stage — Adolphe Appia. Perhaps one day Jean Rosenthal will be able to write some of *her* theories about stage lighting because this American woman has made the greatest contribution to lighting stages and actors, dancers and singers who appear on them since Appia's death. She has turned lighting into an art that has become an integral part of ballet's composite construction rather than just something which makes it possible to see dancers, choreographers' patterns and designers' settings. She can create atmosphere, violent theatrical effects and complete visibility.

In England we first became aware of her during New York City's first season at Covent Garden. The ballets in their repertory used very little scenery but such was the ingenuity and artistry of Rosenthal's lighting that this omission was scarcely noticed. Later we became even more conscious of her work when Martha Graham gave her first London season, and now with Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story* we have before us the example of how lighting can give a patina and a melting continuity to a full-length musical. Her work for Jerome Robbins's Ballets : U.S.A. has increased our admiration even further.

In America she was noticed as far back as 1936. She became Technical Director of the W.P.A. Federal Theatre, and from 1937-39 she was responsible for lighting and producing the Mercury Theatre productions. After the war she held the same position with the New York City Opera and from then on she has been associated with a large number of productions and organisations whose success was due to her in a great part. As far as dance is concerned her association with Martha Graham in 1938 led to lighting the productions of Ballet Society from 1946-50, which automatically brought her into association with New York City Ballet from 1949-57.

OCTOBER 1959 10th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 10 No. 10

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor : E. C. MASON
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

The new diplomatic arm

UP to the end of the good old days just before the war, diplomacy was something carried on by suave gentlemen talking smooth talk at high level and in plush surroundings. Since the war these methods have changed somewhat and there is a new diplomatic approach which is designed to strike nearer to the hearts of the people in the countries concerned — this approach lies through culture. In America, France, Russia and in many other countries they seem supremely conscious of this fact ; in England we are very much slower in the uptake. Of course we have made some sort of effort by having cultural relations departments in various embassies in different parts of the world and by establishing a number of councils devoted to the propagation of British culture, but apart from one or two very notable exceptions, the most notable being the work done by the British Ambassador in Rome, these efforts are pretty half-hearted. It is not that the people in these places are not doing their best but that they are not given the proper backing by the people at home.

Of all the lively arts in Britain, ballet is the one which the foreigner most wants to see, and a visit from, say, the Royal Ballet, could do far more good at establishing friendly, and even trade, relations than could any number of conferences with benign gentlemen sitting round tables. It is sometimes a little humiliating to discover in foreign places that America, France and Russia have sent their most eminent companies free of charge while for a company from Britain they have to pay heavily. It usually remains with the handful of Britain's well-wishers in each country to meet the cost of importing a British company either out of their own pockets or by their persistent cajoling of some local organisation. This is simply not good enough.

It has often been said in these columns that art should never become involved with politics, but this form of diplomacy has nothing to do with politics—even the Russians have come to find this one out. It is merely that through various branches of culture, each country discovers the way of life and thought of the other which, in its turn, leads to an opening of doors and a melting of frontier barriers. If some people around the Whitehall area became aware of this they might save themselves, and incidentally the country, a great deal of the time and money that are now spent on trade and diplomatic missions. If whatever government finds itself in power after the next election takes its blinkers off and faces up to these hard facts, then at least something will have been achieved towards finding some more friends for Britain — and, believe me, she badly needs them.

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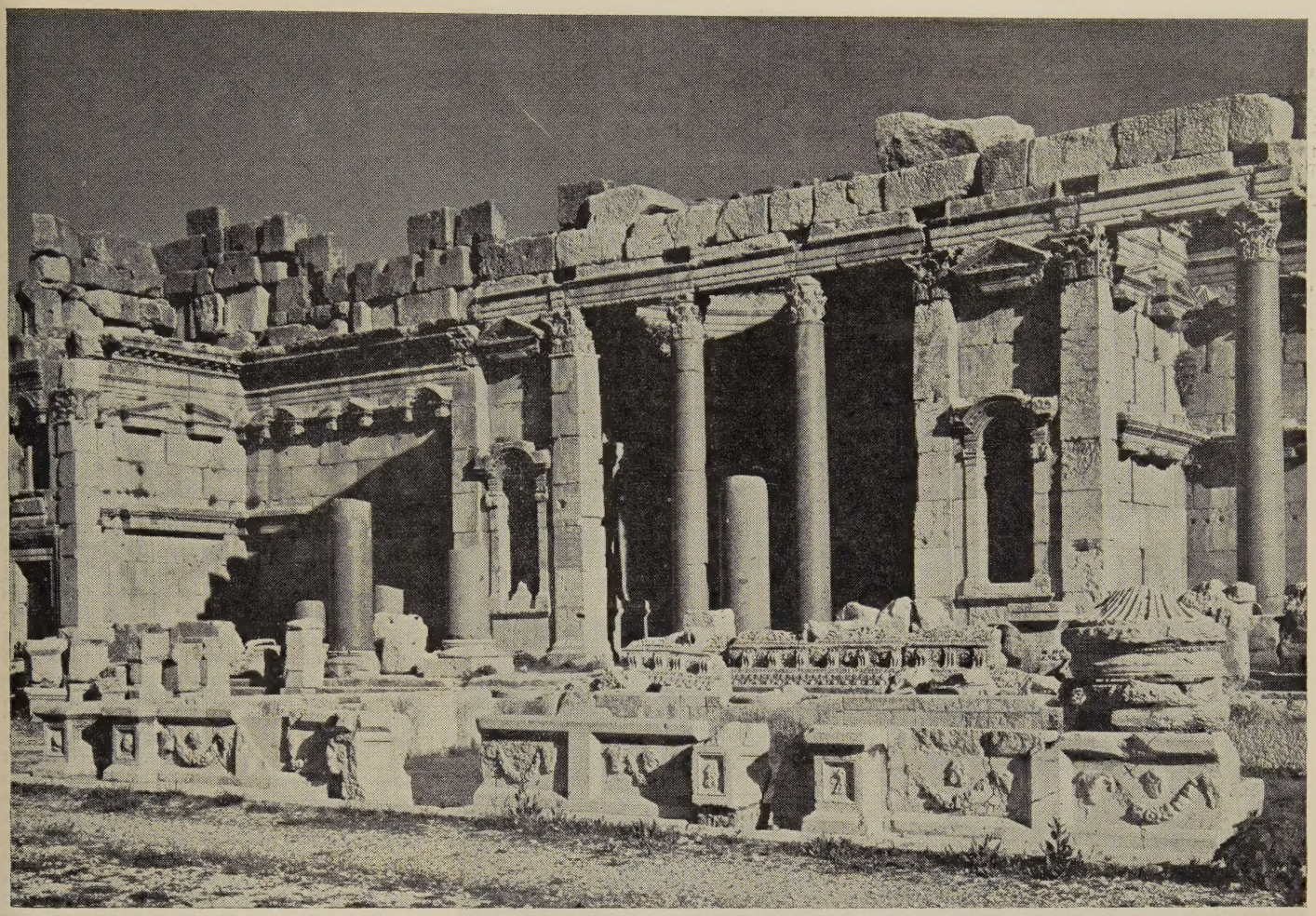


NEW BACKGROUND FOR BALLET RAMBERT : A temple, believed to have been possibly dedicated to the goddess Diana, in the Court of the Altar at Baalbek. It was here that Ballet Rambert danced during their appearances at the Baalbek Festival.

Dancing in the Temple of the Sun

by PETER WILLIAMS

The story of a journey to one of the most noble ruins in the ancient world, of the British ballet company and of the Lebanese Folklore company who danced there.

Photographed by ROLAND SIDAWY

JUST about the time when the glories of Tutankamen's tomb in Egypt were being uncovered and brought to the light of twentieth century day, a magazine called *Wonders of the Past* was published. My parents subscribed to it and the fortnightly parts, when bound eventually in three gold-embossed navy blue volumes, fired my imagination in those far-off days of the early 'twenties. Not only were there photographs of all the great remains of ancient glories but an artist, Matania I think it was, attempted to add ghostly completion to the buildings and people them with equally ghostly figures. Possibly a corny idea but the fact that Pompeii and the Acropolis amongst others could be revealed in some sort of coherent form seemed far more exciting than all those adventure stories that are supposed to appeal to small boys. Amongst the ruins that I remember finding particularly moving was that of Heliopolis, known to us by its Phoenician name of Baalbek.

Over thirty years have passed since then and any excitement that was aroused in me for those noble remains had become dimmed by the mere fact of living — of becoming a commercial artist, a couturier, a stage designer, a critic and an editor — and somehow there was not much time to think of ruins in places that I thought I was unlikely ever to see. Suddenly in the Spring of this year that old spark was lit again by an invitation that came out of the blue. The Committee of the Baalbek International Festival asked me and two other critics — A. V. Coton of the *Daily Telegraph* and Peter Brinson for the *Times* and *Sunday Times* — to go to Baalbek as their guests to see their third festival and in which Ballet Rambert was to take part. Every Summer I have tried to bring the most important European festivals to the pages of *Dance and Dancers,* and this year I was beginning to despair of bringing you anything new. This invitation came as an answer to my problem and the fact that it was in Asia seemed also to be breaking into new territory. I must confess that I knew very little of the Lebanon apart from the aforesaid ruins and the fact that at my home in Cornwall I have some Lebanon cedars, descendants of those that went to build the Temple in Jerusalem and many palaces in Egypt. The Lebanese I had heard were very prosperous, but exactly why I did not know because the cedar stock was said to have dwindled to nothing — anyway it was very nice of them to ask me.

We started out fittingly on what I now think of as a pilgrimage from the cradle of British ballet to the cradle of Western religion, from the steps of the Mercury Theatre in Notting Hill. Marie Rambert's company, so famous for pioneering, was about to pioneer further and break what turned out to be very important new ground for ballet. We three critics seemed to be rather apart from the company, who I felt were regarding us, and rather rightly, with a certain amount of suspicion. They probably thought it irregular that their criticisers should be travelling at such close quarters. However, David and Angela Ellis, acting as directors in place of Rambert, who was having a well-earned rest with her other daughter Lulu in Trinidad, and Fred Bromwich, the company's general manager, talked to us, and some of the dancers warmed-up later. Coton was mainly concerned, as indeed was I but was too cowardly to say so, as to whether we should get food and drink on the plane. A friendly Lebanese lady put our minds at rest. Brinson commented unfavourably on the beauties of the Great West Road.

The flight was uneventful — France slipped away and so did the mountain pass at Bardoneccia where Serge Lido and I, thinly clad as for the beach, once got stuck in a car for many frigid hours. The Alps looked gorgeous and just like Cinerama, then we dropped down to the heat of the Plain of Lombardy and Milan airport, our only stop. How well the Italians design! This airport, completed since I was there earlier this year, was cool and soothing like an oasis. Pretty tiles everywhere, pools of blue water and very comfortable chairs. We took off again and hit the Italian coast at Nervi, pass Portofino looking green and emerald-like in a sapphire Ligurian sea, down the Italian west coast past Naples and Capri, suspended in an azure haze, cross Italy's instep and then see the strange shapes of Greek islands making Dali-like patterns in the fading light. Athens, alas, is hidden beneath cloud, and from then on we have only the stars for company and the knowledge that Crete and Rhodes are somewhere below. As we drop down to Beirut the coast looks very like the French Riviera at night, but the heat seems to meet us somewhere halfway. After ten hours of flying we arrive in a daze and a blaze of television cameras. The smell of Asia hits us with a bang — that mixture of hot dust and spice which no other continent seems able to provide with such intensity. The Lebanese are charming and welcoming; the British are more British than they ever appear to be in England.

Beirut is a modern city and not a great deal of the old part, demolished on the order of the Turkish Governor Azmi Bey during World War I, remains. It is a city of small skyscraper blocks of buildings in an incredible variety of designs and planted in the Venetian red earth without any apparent attempt at planning. Some of the results are surrealistic to a degree. However, I should not be surprised if, in about ten years' time, Beirut becomes the most sought-after playground in the Mediterranean. Physically it is another French Riviera on a far grander scale, flanked on the west by a warm blue sea which can be swam in for almost the whole year; on the east by high mountains where most of the population live during the hotter months and skis in during the colder ones. The secret of Lebanon's wealth remains a secret to even some of our greatest economists, but the main answer lies in the fact that it is the world's super middle-market. With the development of air travel, its modern airport makes Beirut the vital link between east and west. Apart from its great strategic importance, the Lebanon also has a considerable cultural importance in which it is essential that Britain should play its part. After only a few hours in the country it became obvious to me that the appearance of Ballet Rambert was something more than just that of a ballet company at an international festival.

GISELLE COMES TO BACCHUS: Beryl Goldwyn, in the costume from the second act of Giselle, *in the great doorway leading to the Temple of Bacchus. The beautiful Roman sculptured blocks on the sides of the door represent fruit, flowers, ears of corn, egg-pattern, vines, and Cupids and Fauns bearing grapes.*

Coton, Brinson and I stay in the Bristol Hotel in Beirut; after one night there the rest of the company move up to Baalbek. The hotel is very comfortable and well air-conditioned. It also has a roof-garden restaurant with a view that by day is a symphony of blue and white; by night, the carpet of lights and the faint Oriental noises which come up with the breeze promise all kinds of mysteries. Mysteries, I may say, that none of us had time to try and solve.

The drive to Baalbek covers about 60 miles, but the first time we went it seemed more like going to the moon or rather, in this case, the sun. Leaving Beirut one starts, in a series of steep hairpin bends, to go up the Lebanon range. Up and up past Aley and Sofar, where the people of Beirut retreat to in the summer. Up and up into the clouds which give everything the appearance of an unnatural November night in England. Over the top and down into the rich and fertile plain of Beka where Asia becomes more apparent — strings of camels and herds of goats and sheep being driven by Bedouins just like in the days of the Bible. The plain seems interminable until out of the darkness a tiny shaft of light is visible. As we get nearer the shaft of light turns out to be the six remaining columns of the Temple of Jupiter, which the Romans built on a massive substructure so as to make it higher than the surrounding town and countryside. In actual fact, the approach today is not very impressive, and undoubtedly the whole contour of the country has changed with successive earthquakes. It was not until I arrived at the steps leading up to the main gate that the immensity of Baalbek started to overwhelm me. Above these steps, destroyed by the Arabs and rebuilt by the Germans in a very utilitarian way in 1905, rise the remains of the centre doorway and the outer wall glowing in terra-cotta against a velvet night sky. The sudden appearance of Phedra or Medea would not be in the least surprising, certainly not so surprising as was the appearance of two gentle Englishwomen — Lady Diana Cooper (in the Lebanon to stay with her son in the Embassy) and Lady Charlotte Bonham Carter (on a visit to the British Ambassador).

As I passed through the main gate two things happened — one intentional the other coincidental — the sudden revelation of the glory of these ruins, floodlit in such a way that instead of becoming flat and lifeless they seem to be living, and a great fanfare. This fanfare appears to issue from every stone and echoes round from temple to temple like a solar call to prayer and almost Aztec in quality. The effect is moving and awe-inspiring. Later I learn that it is a stereophonic recording of the Fanfare for Saint Sebastian from Debussy's *Le*

Martyre de Saint-Sébastien, which is always used instead of the usual five-minute and minute bell in most theatres.

The first court one arrives in is the great Hexagonal Court which would seem to have been more influenced by the Orient with its six-pointed star than by the Romans who built the temples. At each angle can be seen cells which were probably used by the priests of Jupiter. Originally the centre of the court was unroofed and paved and was undoubtedly used for religious dances preceding ceremonial processions. This ground has known dancing since the dawn of time, so the appearance of a ballet company is nothing alien to it. For the festival, the Hexagonal Court is used for refreshment, and I notice the unmagic word "Pepsi-cola" scattered around (a word, I may say, that crops up even in the remotest villages of the Lebanon). None of the former inhabitants of Baalbek would, I feel, have understood the attraction of this beverage and I can almost feel the distant and beautiful Temple of Bacchus tremble at the idea of anything so removed from the grape.

Through the remains of another great gateway, leaving Pepsi-cola and Hot Dogs behind, the Great Court of the Altar opens up before me. It is in this court with its sculptured niches, with its great steps leading to the Temple of Jupiter, whose remaining six columns seem almost to pierce the heavens, that Ballet Rambert is going to play. The stage is set before a colonnade of red granite pillars to the west of the great steps.

I have gone into this preamble deliberately so as to show the advantages and disadvantages of appearing in what is undoubtedly one of the most noble ruins of the ancient world. Even in decay, and glorious decay at that, it is still this place built by man for the worship of Jupiter, the sun, that is all-dominant.

First Programme

WHAT chance, for instance, has a little Romantic neo-Gothic peasant tragedy such as *Giselle* in such an environment? What chance have the tinkling melodies of Adolf Adam, well constructed into a ballet score though they may be, when confronted with such majesty? Well, as far as the first act of *Giselle* was concerned it was an uphill struggle. It was neither the fault of the cast, virtually the same as the one I recently reviewed when the company appeared at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, nor the orchestra, though it was not really big enough and weak in its wind sections. The drama of this act is of a too puny nature for such surrounding grandeur. It was most certainly not the fault of Beryl Goldwyn, who brought to the title rôle all the simple trust for her wayward lover and the full tragedy of her madness, when she discovers just how wayward he is, that we have come to expect of her. In a normal theatre, hers would have been a great performance, but here is needed all the full-blast histrionics of Greek tragedy or possibly a Callas in one of her famous dramatic operatic rôles. Two other performances managed to battle through — Lucette Aldous in the Peasant *pas de deux* and Gillian Martlew as Bathilde. The charm of the former with her precise footwork and her *allegro* personality, though rather weak arms, seemed more assured since her recent American visit; Martlew was always one of the most sincere Bathildes that we have seen in recent years.

As Albrecht, Christopher Lyall has made considerable progress since he was first seen during the recent Rambert season at Sadler's Wells, but he needs still to develop a more decided personality and get a bit more steel into his spine. He is a nice clean classical dancer though he is apt to finish his *tours en l'air* untidily, but as most of the male dancers in the company did this it might possibly have had something to do with the Baalbek stage.

MYRTHA AGAINST THE LINTEL: Gillian Martlew against the lintel of the doorway to the Temple of Bacchus. In the sculptured detail can be seen an eagle holding the caduceus of Mercury, the patron god of doors, in its beak. A wingéd genius holding the end of a garland can be seen on another block.

Towards the end of the first act, at the height of Giselle's madness, the tragedy started to come to grips with its alien surroundings, but by the interval I was far from happy. Everyone was being kind and both the British Ambassador and Lady Bonham Carter were being staunchly loyal, the latter declaring that "it was so right for peasants to have been in such a place, as that is where they would have been in the times of the temple's greatness". For myself I was less certain, and I went to find solace in the other temples, particularly that of Bacchus, whose 42 outside columns were floodlit in aquamarine and whose interior, where famous theatre companies have played, was left to the light of the moon. Standing where once the sanctuary was I watched the full moon rise above the Anti-Lebanon range and at the moment when it became symmetrically framed by the immense doorway that fanfare blared out again. The temples were starting to live again and possibly it was a good omen.

With the entrance of Gillian Martlew, as Myrtha, in *Giselle's* second act, an unexpected alchemy started to work. Suddenly she and her attendant Wilis became priestesses of the moon invading the temple of the sun. No longer were they woodland sprites with nasty intentions but persons obeying the laws of some ancient ritual. All rather different to Gautier's original intentions but equally effective and the story came alive in a quite new guise. It was, I think, the power of Martlew's Myrtha that brought about this transformation. Here is a performer who has a classical beauty, a more than adequate technique and has learnt to eliminate all superfluous movement. The directness of her approach, which includes

GRAPE-GATHERING DANCE: Beryl Goldwyn as Giselle, centre, seen with her friends in the first act of Giselle *given by Ballet Rambert at Baalbek.*

many subtleties, makes it possible for her to project in vast open spaces as effectively as in the small intimate theatre. After her entrance, the rest of the act fell into place and continued on its way without interference from the gods of the Beka Plain.

But if it was the Queen of the Wilis who dominated this act, as indeed it was her right that she should do, the novice Wili of Beryl Goldwyn was twice as effective as she was when the mortal Giselle in the preceding scene. She had a lovely quality and everything was immaculate, but occasionally I noticed a certain hecticness in her dancing, particularly in her variation. This is rather different to most of today's Giselles who concentrate on the dreamy, floating quality of the creature, and I am not quite certain if it is something deliberate on Goldwyn's part. Although I never saw her in *Giselle,* I imagine that Pavlova might have been something more like this. After all, Giselle has only just become initiated into the Wili mysteries and would not yet have become the completely subjugated creature. It is not unnatural for her either to show some revolt against her fate or to show some outward sign of her newly-acquired power. If this is what Goldwyn intended then it makes a very interesting slant on her interpretation.

The *corps de ballet* were excellent in this act and the dancing of the two leading Wilis, June Sandbrook and Thelma Litster, was particularly memorable. A rosy dawn splashed on the red granite pillars at the back, originally brought from Egypt in some miraculous way only known to the ancient world, and this ballet tragedy ended on a happy note.

By the second interval, I think that about 3,000 people were far more at ease with

SYLPHS IN RUINS: A general impression of the stage where Ballet Rambert played, photographed during a performance of Fokine's Les Sylphides.

ballet in the temple of the sun. It was a pity though that this had to be followed by that most subtle of all ballet jokes — Tudor's *Gala Performance.* Though this is a splendid work for an audience that knows something of the ramifications of ballet and its various schools, the point is bound to be missed by people knowing none of these things. Nor does it stand on its own enough as a "dancing" ballet. In this case most of the various touches of humour were completely lost in the Arabian night air and I felt that it was not until the second movement of Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* that this audience realised that a joke was intended. After that there were scattered titters, particularly at the broader jokes, but there was no escaping the fact that it is really not a work for such a place. Nor in fact did it receive a particularly good performance, apart from Lucette Aldous as La Fille de Terpsichore from Paris, though this was possibly due to the fact that Gillian Martlew, due to dance the Moscow ballerina, had to be replaced at the last moment owing to a form of 'flu.

Although this first programme of ballet at any Baalbek festival ended on a rather damp note, it seemed to be generally agreed at the large party which the British Ambassador gave at a local hotel after the performance, and also in the press on the following day, that ballet had effectively waved its banner in the Lebanon and that it was an essential for future festivals. My own feelings were that although it was only the second act of *Giselle* that really came off, the possibilities of ballet in such surroundings were enormous. And it was with the second programme that these possibilities started to make themselves apparent.

Second Programme

Fokine's *Les Sylphides,* like the aforementioned act of *Giselle,* is a *ballet blanc,* and it was this that started off the second programme two nights later. The lack of colour in the costumes and the deceitful simplicity of the choreography were ideal for the environment. It did not matter that the poet was seeking inspiration in a ruin rather than in Benois' moonlit glades, because ruins are equally in accord with the spirit of Romanticism. What is more, the dancers of Ballet Rambert understand

Romanticism and appear to give something far nearer to Fokine's original intentions than is the case with most companies performing this work today. The *corps* have an about-to-take-the-air quality and are not just dancers going through their paces and forming into pretty groups. Lucette Aldous, in the *Valse,* reminded me more of Papillon in *Carnaval,* which was right and charming because one frittery sort of Sylph provides an admirable contrast to the slight soulfulness of the others. Goldwyn, in the first *Mazurka* and the *Valse pas de deux,* had many of the qualities of Markova and that feeling of gossamer as though she never quite touches the earth's surface. The secret of this lies, I feel, in the way in which the working foot comes down to the ground, caressing it rather than letting it land plonk; it also lies in the position of the head, which should invariably be looking up except when she is casting beguiling glances at the poet. She should be an aerial creature brought to earth for a few moments in her desire to inspire a poet lost in reverie — this is what Goldwyn manages to convey. *Prélude* was danced by Gillian Martlew, who gave it all the spirit of nostalgia that has only been achieved by Riabouchinska, Markova and Krassovska in performances since the war.

It was with *Les Sylphides* that Ballet Rambert won the Lebanese audience wholly on to the side of ballet. Nor was this opinion affected by the very slight nature of Walter Gore's *Simple Symphony* that followed. Its complete lack of pretension and its rustic flavour did not ill-accord with the surroundings, and it was given a competent, if not particularly exciting, performance, though the third movement, *Sentimental Saraband,* was touchingly given by John Chesworth and June Sandbrook. Many of the audience seemed to think that it was some sort of British folklore manifestation, which it was impossible to deny as hotly as one should owing to the fact that there is a definite folksy element in both Gore's choreography and in Benjamin Britten's score. It proved to be a suitable curtain raiser to Gore's next ballet, *Winter Night.*

This was the undoubted triumph of the season, and the reasons for this are worth studying because they might effect the whole future approach to ballet in surroundings of this kind. First and foremost, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto (surprisingly well played by an orchestra really too small for it) has a lush grandeur which was reflected in the monumental stones. Secondly, though the ballet has a veneer of abstraction it does not obscure the very strong human tragedy that is the main theme. This off-with-the-old-love-on-with-the-new story is universal, and when it is inextricably interwoven into pure dancing it satisfies both the love of drama and the love of movement which is present in most people who go to ballet. The third reason for the work's success lay in the conception and portrayal of the woman who realises that middle age is coming on and that her lover is turning to youth. In this rôle, Gillian Martlew took on a stature that measured up to all the Queens of Greek tragedy, and therefore made Baalbek her natural home and background so that the highest column never dominated her. The theme of the ballet thus became *her* tragedy and the rest are but shadows. It is strange how this ballet alters in balance according to circumstance and whoever is playing the principal rôles. Beryl Goldwyn is not ideally cast as the young fresh love, yet she does manage to make one vital point — her innocence. She is not a hard-hearted young girl determined to get her man at all cost but someone in love with her youth who is unconscious of the fact that she has played havoc with two people's emotional lives. John Chesworth is a rather sturdy lover who does not evoke much sympathy for his predicament; the anguish which Walter Gore achieved originally, and later Alexander Bennett, escapes him. Yet he is a good partner and he in no way lets the

SWANILDA AND JUPITER: Lucette Aldous, as Swanilda, and Kenneth Bannerman, as Franz, in a lift from the third-act pas de deux *in* Coppélia. *The columns of the Temple of Jupiter can be seen in the background.*

THE TOP TWO: Both these ballets were considered to be the most successful in Baalbek's ruins. Above, Walter Gore's Winter Night, *with Goldwyn left and Martlew centre. Below, Fokine's* Les Sylphides *with Goldwyn and Christopher Lyall in the* Valse pas de deux.

LEBANESE FOLK DANCERS ON THEIR HOME GROUND: Wadia and Mirwan Jarrar, choreographers of the Lebanese Folklore Company, in national costume before the remaining columns of the Temple of Jupiter.

work down, it is just that the whole ballet has altered to become a frame for Martlew.

As far as the *corps de ballet* work is concerned it has become a rather "busy" frame, and some of their movements appear to be rather meaningless, yet in certain moments of repose they achieve great beauty. I shall never forget a group of four girls who at one moment became perfectly framed between two of Baalbek's mighty columns; they might have been something from the temple's days of glory fossilised by time. Nor shall I forget a moment towards the end of the first movement when Martlew runs off to be caught by four boys and held aloft as the lighting changed from the day of the first movement to the night of the second. It was one of those theatrical effects which suddenly takes your breath away.

So as it is today, *Winter Night* boils down to three moods of Martlew — disillusionment in the first movement, despair in the second movement and resignation in the third — what is more she managed to get across all the little incidents, the nuances, that lead from one mood to the other. To my way of thinking she holds an almost unique place in British ballet.

An anti-climax came with the final work of the evening because with *Coppélia* Act 3 we were back in the tiddly-pom school of 19th century music, which has no place in this environment, nor did the orchestra contribute much to giving it any sort of life. It is probably Delibes' other successful ballet score that would have been more at home and *Sylvia,* the nymph of Diana, would have come into her own. Nevertheless, Lucette Aldous brought such sparkle and vitality to Swanilda and her *pas de deux* and variations were so well given that it almost made the whole thing worthwhile. The rustic boorishness of Franz was too much emphasised in Kenneth Bannerman's interpretation and his variation was lacking in polish. It should never be forgotten that peasants on fête days become the world's aristocrats, and this is particularly the case when they dance. Norman Morrice, for a few seconds, gave the Lebanese a sample of his undoubted artistry in Dr. Coppélius's brief appearance in this act, but to retain any semblance of story when the third act is given alone only causes unnecessary confusion to those who have never seen the entire work. Doboujinsky's costumes looked unbelievably sugary when taken out of their context.

It is only by trial and error that it is possible to find out just what sort of ballet is suitable for unusual surroundings, and in this instance Ballet Rambert, as has so often been the case in the past, have acted as guinea pigs. There is no question but that they were deeply appreciated and that they have won yet another country over to ballet. The mistakes of repertory choice, already mentioned, could only be discovered on the spot, and these were outweighed by the works which seemed undoubtedly right in the surroundings. It would seem that both they and any other companies that appear in future dance festivals would be wise to present works which have a certain lushness and grandeur in their music, that near-abstract ballets are undoubtedly the most successful, or if there is a definite drama that it should be on a very grand scale. Works such as Lifar's *Suite en Blanc,* Ashton's *Homage to the Queen* or *Scénès de Ballet* and any one of Balanchine's or Massine's symphonic ballets would all be ideal, and what is more the temples of Baalbek would give them added stature.

Anxious to see how the Lebanon's own contribution, their Lebanese Folklore Company, would fare, I stayed over for a few extra days.

Lebanese Folklore Company

BEFORE the Rambert season ended, the Lebanese Folklore Company invited Coton, Brinson and myself to see a rehearsal of some of their work. Dancing in a large covered space, open to the air on two sides, under some flats in Beirut, they gave an impressive display, and all three of us were excited by them. It was this that finally decided me to stay on, the other two could not as they already had commitments in Edinburgh.

The revival of interest in Lebanese folklore is mainly due to the work and enthusiasm of two people — Mirwan and Wadia Jarrar. This charming married couple met some years ago when they were both taking part in various folk dance presentations, and it is they who in previous festivals formed the group and were responsible for the choreography. The present group had only been formed for about two months and consisted mainly of students and people in business who volunteered to dance in their spare time. This has meant that they gave up all their evenings and days off; they gave up their annual holidays to dance in this year's festival.

While such sacrifices are always commendable one is often inclined to wonder, after seeing the results, whether it was really all worth it. In this particular case I think that the sacrifices were decidedly worth while because the Jarrars have formed a group of boys and girls who have Moiseyev-like discipline on the stage and who manage to project natural charm at the same time. Never for a moment would it be suspected that they are anything other than seasoned performers.

It is of course a very different thing being shown a few choice morsels in

rehearsal in a place where the ceiling is low and the music of the orchestra overwhelms one, to having it all dispersed in the open air and mixed with innumerable singing items, and I was curious to know how it would all work out in the change from sea level to the high altitude of Baalbek.

The locality in the Court of the Altar was changed from the Rambert performances. The folklore group found their stamping-ground on the vast steps leading up to the Temple of Jupiter. The audience were placed on the floor of the court and the dancers made their entrances over the head of the steps, which were so high that the figures could not be seen until they were silhouetted against the night sky. Although extremely effective, this sort of entrance imposed certain limitations because it meant that they had to walk down a great number of perilous steps before reaching the temporary stage which came at the head of the first flight. It also meant that the actual dancing area was still placed so high that it was impossible to distinguish the floor pattern in any of the dances.

No doubt taking all this into consideration, the Jarrars have altered the natural patterns of the dances so that they are theatrically effective from the front only. Another obstacle that they have had to contend with is that in fact the folk dance of the Lebanon is very limited and mainly consists of "Dabkets" which vary slightly in different regions. The principal steps being *staccato* hops and stamps on the part of the men and undulating promenades on the part of the women. Of course there were several exceptions, but it is the Dabket that rules the day and it is necessary to present it with as many variations as possible. As the first part of the programme wore on it seemed that the dancers were continually forming into several rows of six or eight people and that these lines would then join up with other lines so as to make one long line, or else they would be forming into crescents or circles. Splendid and spirited as it all was I started to long for an outstanding soloist to appear, but the few girls who did appear in solo numbers were mainly involved in hip and torso gyrations and, to me, rather meaningless and indefinite arm movements. The one remarkable and thrillingly effective exception to all this was provided by a Bedouin Sword Dance performed by both boys and girls. With a small shield in the left hand and a sword in the right they beat the one against the other, sometimes with the shield held at the back of the shoulder. The sound of the metal beating together in perfect unison from a large number of dancers was weird, extremely stirring and created something of the effect of a good performance of the *Prince Igor* dances. It was barbaric and seemed to issue from the heart of Asia. It was also curious how with all these songs and dances the whole temperature of Baalbek changed: the Roman temples seemed to diminish and the walls built by the Arabs, outside the temples after the Romans had departed and when Baalbek became an Arab fortress, took on a new importance as though they were welcoming their own.

But if the dances were somewhat limited the actual songs and music had infinite variety and they were given added distinction by a competent choir and the solo work of Feirouz and Wadih Safi. Feirouz is the Lebanon's number one folklore singer and the style, ease and lovely mellow quality of her singing ought to make her equally beloved in countries far from her own frontier. To hear her voice floating effortlessly into the Asian night was something I shall never forget. Somehow she seemed to

REHEARSAL: Some of the Lebanese dancers seated on the steps of the Temple of Jupiter which is the actual spot on which they danced. In the background can be seen the walls built by the Arabs when Baalbek became a fortress after the Romans left.

PERFORMANCE: The full company of dancers ranged across the stage at the end of one of their numbers.

express all the joy and sorrow that, through the centuries, has been the lot of this particular region. When she sang time seemed to stand still and several thousand years became but a minute. Wadih Safi is a large jolly man with a great personality, and when he sang his songs from the Lebanese mountains he might well have been singing flamenco coplas.

The first part of the programme had been built by the Jarrars and director Sabri Sherif into a number of typical scenes — an evening in a Nomad encampment and various incidents in village life. They were extremely well produced and the singing and dancing was so well integrated that there was never too much of anything. On the other hand, for European audiences, this first half running as it did for over an hour and a half, was far too long. The second half had a story woven through it which concerned the stealing of a young goat belonging to a farm girl Haifa (played and sung by Feirouz). In the end it turned out that the theft was not done in malice but because Haifa had refused to sing to the villagers. Several more village incidents rather detracted from the main thread of the story, which would undoubtedly have been more effective had it been told without these extraneous scenes, but they were mainly bound together with some more lovely songs from Feirouz. The theft of the goat, carried out by five red-clad boys stealing like rats over the steps, and a comic court scene were the undoubted highlights of this part. And so was a charming arrangement for the girl dancers watering flowers, which did not seem to have much to do with the narrative. Otherwise the dancing consisted mainly of more variations on the Debkeh.

I was often asked how I thought the company would be received in Europe. There is no doubt that presenting as it does a more Asiatic approach to folk dance and song than has been seen or heard from many of the folklore groups that have been touring around over the past years, it would arouse great interest. It is far more professional than most and much of its effectiveness comes from its massiveness. It would obviously have to be cut considerably and greater variety introduced into the dances. This should not be difficult if some of the dances were used to illustrate a number of the songs, which appear to be infinitely varied. Unless it is possible to present the company in a theatre with an effective alfresco décor then it would seem essential for them to appear in the open air. Apart from the countries bordering the Mediterranean, the uncertain weather makes this a doubtful proposition. It would also seem essential for the Lebanon to establish a permanent company which could work all the year instead of having to draw on the goodwill of people willing to give up their spare time. These and many other problems have to be faced, but seeing how a handful of enthusiasts have established the Baalbek Festival and how they, through their efficiency and the natural goodwill they emanate, have raised its stature, then I think that it is perfectly possible for them to overcome any obstacles that might lie in the way of the future presentation of their own folklore in other lands.

LEBANESE SCENES: Top left, a Bedouin Sword Dance, which was one of the most stirring numbers in the programme.
Middle left, boys stealing Haifa's goat from the second part of the programme. Below left, the famous Lebanese folk singer, Feirouz, surrounded by the chorus.

EDINBURGH '59

The first two weeks of the 1959 Edinburgh Festival saw a company from France — Les Ballets Jean Babilée — and a company from Finland — The National Ballet of Finland — which are here reviewed by NOEL GOODWIN and CLIVE BARNES

Les Ballets Jean Babilee

First Programme

WITH the addition of Andrée Howard's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* to the repertoire of the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, six of the twelve new ballets premièred by the ill-fated Edinburgh International Ballet at the festival last year have now survived among different European companies. In spite of the mismanagement and bankruptcy that attended the Edinburgh venture, it is no small achievement to find that half the product is still marketable. Yet I observed no pang of regret in any quarter of the festival city that the idea was not being continued this year. It was impossible, of course, with the Edinburgh purse-strings tightened to the extent they have, and with so much paring of cheese on all sides I was not surprised at the superstitious coyness which caused the festival management to avoid any reference to 1959 at the thirteenth year of its presentation.

All the same I find it tragic that enterprise should still be harnessed in blinkers, and that a scheme of potential value to ballet as a whole as well as capable of giving Edinburgh a distinctive character in this branch of the lyric arts should be so abruptly abandoned. In its place, a return was made this year to the imported package-deal of companies from abroad, bringing their own prepared repertoire representative, it was proudly claimed, of a wide variety of ballet. The first incumbents exposed to the merciless limitations of Edinburgh's Empire Theatre, with its treacherous stage, inept machinery and a lighting installation still creaking with paralytic seizures, were Les Ballets Babilée from Paris, who began a week's visit on 24 August.

Driven remorselessly by the clock towards other engagements, I caught on the wing, as it were, only two remarks by Babilée when he met the Press later in the week. One was to the effect that he first formed his present company of 15 dancers about two years ago. The other proclaimed that he had little use for classical ballet of the museum as a feature of his creative purpose. I leave others to draw what conclusions they choose from this. For my own part it was a relief to find none of the familiar hackneyed excerpts pressed into duty for programme-padding, although by no means all Babilée's selections were worthy replacements. He presented two programmes of assorted miniatures, making his own first appearance in Massine's solo *Variation.*

From his first appearance in Britain with Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées in 1946, Jean Babilée established himself as a dancer of distinctive individuality. He has since developed his personality almost to the point of eccentricity, while maintaining an acrobatic technique of movement still capable of sparking flashes of genius in some expected and several unexpected places. The *Variation,* in rolled-sleeve shirt, trousers and character shoes (evidently his preferred garb), exploited his delight in the short, stabbing jumps and beats, feline spring and dramatic half-turns, somersaults and frozen moments of living sculpture which furnish the armoury of his technique and the character of his style. He looked on the verge of breaking into heel-drumming *zapateado* at any moment, and it is the measure of his integrity that he resisted any such temptation.

BABILEE: Jean Babilée in his ballet, Le Boucle, *in which he plays the rôle of a television script writer who becomes involved in the actual performance. This was one of the many short works by Babilée and others which was given at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, during the first week of the Festival.*

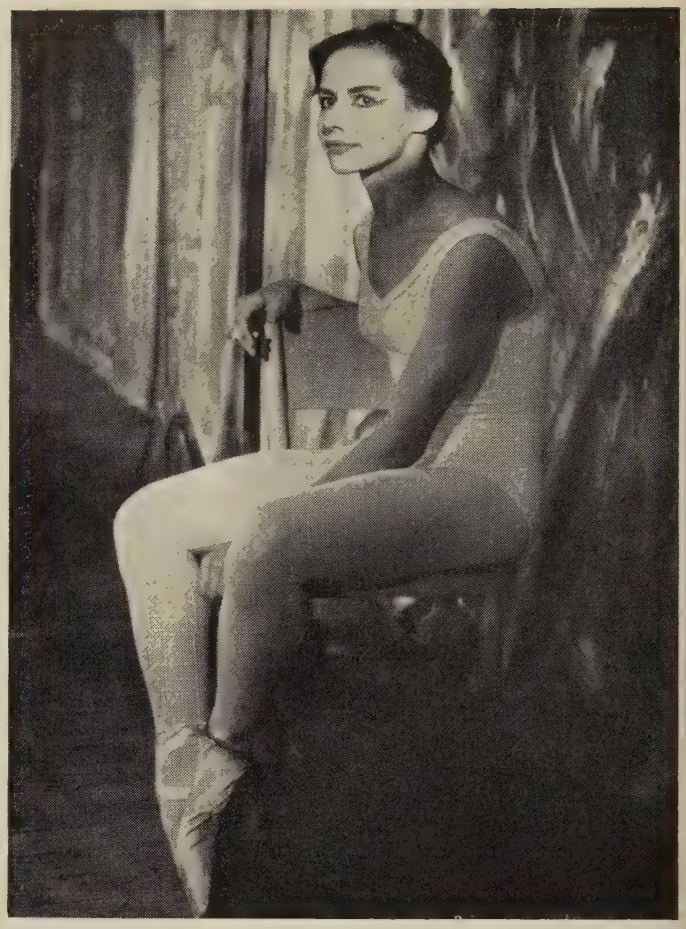
It is also to Babilée's credit that he made no attempt to embellish *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort,* the item of most substance in his first programme. The Jean Cocteau-Roland Petit drama, with its bold use of the Bach organ Passacaglia in C minor, holds as much tingle of excitement and emotional assault as its startling impact when it was first created twelve years ago. It seems now to be the first of the "beatnik" ballets, long before the uglification of language vomited up that monstrous word, but because its spirit transcends the narrow, self-pitying *milieu* of its theme it acquires significance and durability. Babilée as the young man desperate for love, brutally repulsed by feminine cruelty, lacked nothing in vivid character as he let himself be driven to suicide at a rope's end in his grimy attic, finding salvation in a death above the rooftops of Paris. His new co-star was Claire Sombert, a smouldering blonde dancer of supple vitality but insufficient cruelty of purpose in this particular part.

She also appeared with Babilée in his more recently-created *Balance à Trois,* together with the lankily impressive Gérard Ohn, whose soft lyricism of movement and feeling for line belies his tall, angular appearance. The ballet's theme is credited to Babilée and Constantin Népo — a slight but adaptable excuse for competitive calisthenics in a sunlit gymnasium. Tom Keogh's scenery consisted of a skylight backdrop, parallel bars and a vaulting horse; the music by Jean-Michel Damase had rhythmic vigour and some melodic character. A girl (Sombert) engaged in limbering exercises is interrupted first by one athlete (Babilée), whose solemn muscularity attracts her admiration. Later a second athlete (Ohn) twice makes an amusing track-suited entrance shadow-boxing his way across the stage. The two men engage in acrobatic rivalry, finally subdued by the girl demonstrating her own athletic supremacy and establishing cordial friendliness all round.

For a ballet of this kind, surprisingly little use was made of the gymnastic equipment and rather too much of featureless promenading. Neither Sombert nor Ohn were given much chance to develop their rôles, while Babilée's own part, realised in greater detail, underlined a crucial dilemma which now seems to be facing him. It is the extent to which he can wear a convincing mask of comedy. His strength (I do not mean his technical proficiency) inclines more to the qualities of tragedy, it appears to me, and while a certain wry wit is natural to him, I never once found that his deliberate comedy engaged my sympathies to the same extent. I suspect it is chiefly a lack of pathos that makes his humour seem contrived and unconvincing. The clown who sneers down his nose is a contradiction in character, and Babilée has yet to separate one from the other.

He included the work of a variety of choreographers in his programmes, some of them dancers in his own company. One of

L'EMPRISE : *Gerard Ohn, known in Britain for his appearances with Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées, in Dick Sanders' ballet at Edinburgh.*



BIEGOVITCH : Iovanka Biegovitch, a newcomer to Britain and who is one of the stars of Babilée's company, resting in the wings.

these was Adolfo Andrade, who presented *Orphée,* a bold and simple outline of the Orpheus legend conceived as an extended *pas de deux* for Josette Clavier and himself. It made effective use of Liszt's music, was clear and direct in its intentions and included a neat demonstration of Eurydice's crucial lack of faith when the joy of reunion led her to swing ecstatically through Orpheus's widespread legs in such a way that he could not prevent her from confronting him. The two dancers were boldly expressive in style, with a subtle awareness of tragedy that gave perspective to the drama.

Practically nothing about *Balletino* by Dick Sanders left any impression except the feeling that the confused sequence of dull musical comedy routines in the pseudo-American manner was a total waste of the company's talents. It conveyed no sense of form or worthwhile ideas in the threadbare choreography, nor was it enhanced by the music of Jacques Ibert. Iovanka Biegovitch, with Catherine Verneuil and Andrade, might have made something out of it if there had been anything to make, but the *corps* showed a distressing lack of *ensemble* precision. In view of Babilée's remark about museum classics, a potted version of Lifar's academic *Suite en Blanc* seemed an odd sort of choice to begin the programme, particularly as the dancers had a none too secure grasp of its stylistic requirements. The Lalo music to which it is set exposed at the outset the weakness of the scratch orchestra recruited "under the management of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra" to serve all the ballets this year. Conductor Daniel Stirn instilled some semblance of discipline and unanimity into them, but what visiting companies must think of the standard of British orchestras if they judge by what is provided for them I shudder to imagine. The Edinburgh Festival can and should do better than this, if visiting dancers are not to feel insulted.

Noël Goodwin.

Second Programme

TRAVELLING up to Edinburgh to catch the second of the two Babilée programmes, my memory kept returning to that night in April 1946 when we first saw Babilée dance in England.

Babilée was the first great male dancer I ever saw. Being too young to have anything but the haziest of impressionist recollections of the pre-war Ballets Russes, my ballet education really started during the first year or so of the war. Ballet at that time had many virtues, many qualities, but even its dizziest fan-follower — and I don't think I ever quite qualified in that category — could hardly claim, with hand on heart, that a high standard of male dancing was among them. In those now far-off days any boy who could do a *double tour en l'air* was something of a rarity, a "virtuoso" to be watched for, a promising talent to be eagerly discussed. Even after the war, when the Sadler's Wells Ballet moved into Covent Garden, and the situation improved somewhat, our native male dancers were still one of the company's least rewarding assets. Then came that first night in April at the Adelphi Theatre when Babilée danced.

That first programme to be given by Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées (hardly anyone had then heard of the company, and I still recall my bitter disappointment when, on examining the theatre's advance notices, the name of Lifar was not included in the personnel!) had opened with *Concert de Danses,* a ballet most notable for its pink and silver Beaurepaire décor. Then came Janine Charrat's *Jeu de Cartes* and with it, Babilée! In his black, white and yellow joker's costumes he twisted and spun lightly but powerfully across the stage, ushering in the post-war age of ballet with a sardonic snarl. A month or so after that night it was Richard Buckle, in his magazine, who summed up all our feelings when he wrote something about "a divine wind blowing through the theatre". I was journeying to Edinburgh to see again my first, and still perhaps favourite, divine wind.

I was also going to see a ballet company, and I remembered Les Ballet de Champs-Elysées. The strange impression is given now that this company was under-estimated on its first appearance, but I don't really think it was. I have still got most of the press notices and for the most part these were remarkably favourable, *possibly* over-kind. For despite the company's dancers, its décors (and how wonderful they were to our colour-starved eyes) and its fascinating ideas, it still only had three worthwhile ballets — *Les Forains, Les Amours de Jupiter,* and *Le Rendezvous.* And even in these three, with perhaps the exception of *Jupiter,* the choreography by an unknown young man, Roland Petit, was perilously close to thin. We should have been warned, we should have seen the emptiness behind the chic façade, but we were easily fooled in those days, and in any case this whiff of

elegant decadence was a damn sight more entertaining than the spectacle of Robert Helpmann tearing his soul out twice nightly at Covent Garden.

It was at the Winter Garden Theatre nearly a year later that the Champs-Elysées first really showed its hand with Petit's piece of poppy-Cocteau *Le Jeune Homme et La Mort*. Its unmusical and unexpressive choreography and its sensationalist subject matter pointed the way for a French ballet which has never since looked forward. The sad thing — both for this company and its many successors — was that the primrose path it chose to choreographic damnation was made immensely alluring by the marvellous efforts of France's artists and poets, her musicians and couturiers, and her wonderful new generation of young dancers. But it never found a choreographer who could breathe life into its ballets, and the beautiful, perhaps too perfect, machine for ballet-making has been left derelict and unproductive. This is what I thought on my way to Edinburgh. And, for that matter, this is what I thought on my way back.

Of all the French choreographers Babilée was probably the one I thought most hopeful. To an extent this programme has not altered my view, yet the fact must be faced that it is now more than ten years since he started his choreographic career, and he does not seem to have matured greatly from his first efforts in *L'Amour et Son Amour* and *Til Eulenspiegel*. Perhaps the difficulty is that he has always been essentially an "amateur" dancer and choreographer. A gentleman among the players, he has seemed to dance and create more for himself than for his audience, and I suspect that the reason for his apparent failure to develop is partly lack of opportunity but also perhaps partly lack of stimulus. The two main ballets on this programme both showed Babilée's shrewd appraisal of what goes towards making a good ballet, and yet both of them misfired.

Consider the opening ballet *Sable*. This is another beach ballet, one of the *genre* that has been popular ever since Dolin, Cocteau and Chanel made their memorable journey in *Le Train Bleu*. But here we have a beach ballet with a difference; the difference being that Babilée has attempted to produce a ballet of mood and character. Not content with a little choreographic exploration in the byways of beach games, he has ambitiously attempted to convey the shifting emotions of four young people drawn momentarily together under the sun. While the idea is good, the choreography carrying it is fragmentary, and without any underlying design or kinetic impulse — it wanders along the Mediterranean shore as aimlessly as any beachcomber.

When the ballet was first given in Paris three years ago it had a décor by Lila di Nobili, and I can remember seeing photographs at the time showing a handsomely romantic seascape. In Edinburgh this had been abandoned and the crumpled sky cloth gave the ballet an air of down-at-heel shabbiness from which it could hardly hope to recover. Maurice Le Roux's music was probably not much more than cinematic small talk, yet like the rest of the music on this programme its quality was so obscured by the playing of something called "The Festival Ballet Orchestra" (managed, the programme blithely assured us, by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra — what would Beecham have said!) that comment on its quality is a little unfair. These lads made even Bach sound as if he hardly knew his business!

The ballet was notable for showing us a honey of a Yugoslav dancer, Iovanka Biegovitch, and another attractive newcomer, Catherine Verneuil, while it was pleasant to renew our acquaintance with Gérard Ohn.

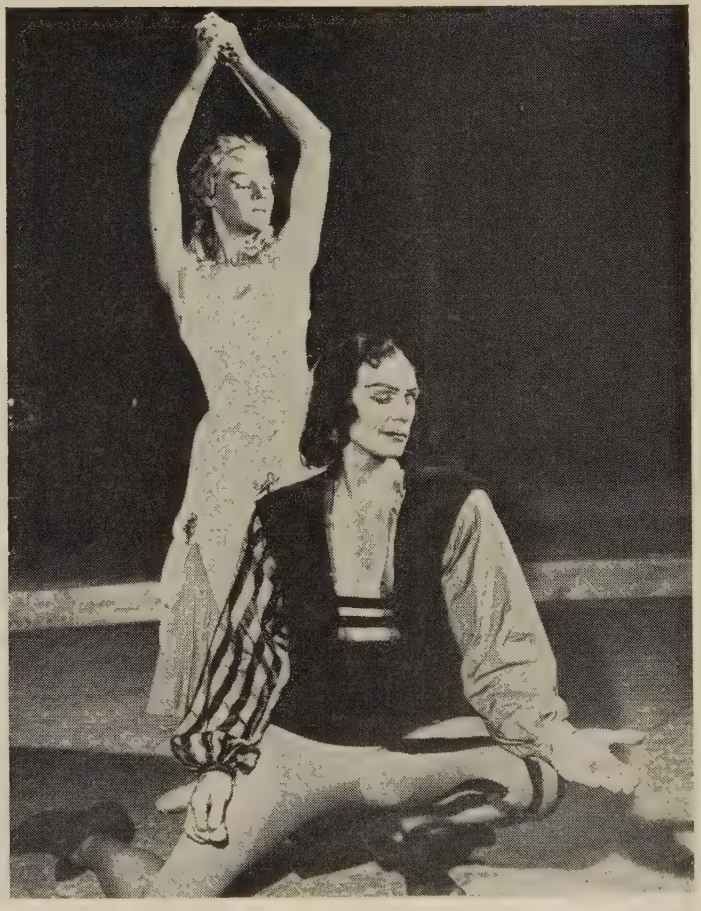
A solo to Bach music by Janine Charrat was danced in a somewhat detached manner by Claire Sombert, yet passed quickly enough and proved popular with an audience that clearly did not share Babilée's interest in extending the boundaries of ballet.

Babilée made his first appearance in a *pas de deux* called *Divertimento*, choreographed by himself. Taken, according to the programme, from a film called *Métier de Danseur*, and danced with Josette Clavier, this unpretentiously amiable duet contained the best choreography of the evening. There was a most attractive moment when Babilée did a crackling little dance with a skipping rope, and just to watch him, still with that superb muscular control, do a few slow cartwheels, more than justified my 350 mile trip.

More ambitious than this attractive party piece was the other Babilée ballet on the programme, *La Boucle*. A young man, alone in a projection studio, trying vainly to record a commercial for a TV soap ad, falls in love with the girl growing a little lovelier each day and chases her straight through the screen, getting involved not only with his beloved but also with a couple of spare vamps to make the number up. The story by Michel Drach is as bedizened with gimmicks as a Christmas tree, yet with its mildly pleasing music by Jean-Michel Damase, this wry twist to the conventions of romantic ballet was adroitly produced (at least obviously would have been were it not

L'EPREUVE D'AMOR: *Maj-Lis Rajala in the revival of Fokine's ballet to Mozart music by the National Ballet of Finland.*

SCARAMOUCHE: *Lisa Taxell and Klaus Salin in the dramatic ballet, for which Sibelius composed the music, also given by the Finnish company.*



GISELLE: *Doris Lainë in the title rôle, and Klaus Salin, as Albrecht, in the Finnish version of the Bolshoi production.*

DON QUIXOTE: *Klaus Salin in the shortened version of the famous Minkus ballet.*

for the by now celebrated inability of the stage staff at Edinburgh's Empire Theatre to produce anything but a hiatus) and could have been witty. But the choreography got nowhere slowly and the work just spluttered out. It had its good moments, such as Babilée looking like a beat-generation Fred Astaire dancing a self-contained little number to a recording of Elvis Presley singing *Blue Moon*, and the production tricks gave the work an air of fantasy absolutely right for ballet.

Following this came a *pas de deux* created by Gérard Ohn to music by Albinoni for Claire Sombert and himself. It proved a tastefully restrained essay in choreography of no particular originality, except in its unusual style of partnering, doubtless influenced by the Bolshoi, where Sombert literally climbed all over the lithely immense Ohn.

We were then given a revival of Lichine's ballet without music, without décor and practically, as some cynic once said, without dancing, *La Création*. When this 11-year-old ballet was first created for the Champs-Elysées company its "story" was made apparent by the programme. Babilée, who created the leading rôle, was called "The Choreographer", while other dancers were referred to by such symbolic names as "His Uncertainty", "His Temptation" and "His Idea". At the time the ballet was enthusiastically received, but it is looking a somewhat distressingly old hat nowadays. The programme omitted any hints of the choreographer's scenario, and I doubt whether one person in a hundred gathered what the work was supposed to be about, for without the code book it is completely unintelligible. Of course, no ballet without music is entirely unimpressive, as the absence of music will give it at worst a portentous air of significance. Babilée continues to give a remarkably well projected performance as the Choreographer.

The last work in the programme was a ballet by Dick Sanders (with theme by Pierre Rhallys, music by Georges Delerue, and décor by François Ganeau) called *L'Emprise*. This was a light-heavyweight piece about a war-time fugitive and a mad girl, whom he first humours and then has to strangle to keep her quiet. Here the choreography was unoriginal, yet fluent, and, in its way, effective. Ganeau's décor of a bomb-wrecked mansion proved nicely evocative — this, incidentally, was the only full décor on view during the evening, and even then it only consisted of a back-cloth and staircase rostrum — and the ballet was most powerfully danced by Sombert and Ohn. The choreography made little attempt to be expressive and, despite its fluency, took hardly any note of the music. However, having heard the music, I would be prepared to grant that the choreographer's avoidance of it may have been indicative of his good distaste.

So there it was. A curiously patchwork evening, behind which one rarely felt the guiding hand of directorial control, and one was left with a generalised impression of a group of dancers searching a somewhat bare stage for something to dance. But Babilée himself was fine — more careless perhaps than before, less classical, even more wilful, but still fine. He crouches his body, slants his head, does his god-like shuffle, and occasionally gives his self-absorbed scowl at the peeping-tom-audience, and you realize that this is still a unique personality of the dance.

Clive Barnes.

National Ballet of Finland

YOU pays your money and you takes your choice — or so they say. I presume the Edinburgh Festival Society paid its money for the National Ballet of Finland, the second of its dance visitors. Yet I find it hard to believe that much choice entered into the invitation of this provincial dance company.

I see the scene in the Planning Room of the Festival as something like this. *First Voice:* "Fine then, so that's all settled, but how about the ballet?" *Second Voice* (vaguely): "Ballet?" *First Voice:* "You know, at that Empire place." *Second Voice:* "Oh yes, the *ballet*. Well won't that American company led by the *West Side Story* chappie be around? The Greeks are having him, you know." *First Voice:* "I suppose they'd do — perhaps get some backing from A.N.T.A. too — but we ought to have something a bit more, well, you know . . . *distinguished*." *Second Voice* (dreamily): "A *national* ballet, that's the thing." *First Voice:* "Let's see, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland (pause), Panama, Sweden . . ." *Second Voice:* "Not Sweden,

old man, Swedish opera already. What's happening in Finland?" *First Voice:* "Finland?" *Second Voice:* "Why not?" *First Voice:* "Why not?" *Second Voice:* "Nice chaps the Scandinavians." *First Voice:* "Often quite reasonable, too." *Second Voice* (thoughtfully): "They wouldn't be unpleasant about that stage, would they? Remember those Danes, or were they Lithuanians?" *First Voice:* "Letts." *Second Voice:* "Yes, let's. I'll drop their Ambassador a line in the morning."

Of course this is fanciful nonsense, and I can well believe that the Festival authorities sent a ballet expert to Helsinki who inspected the repertory in detail, chose the ballets for Edinburgh and made a slight error of artistic judgment which could have happened to anyone — especially a ballet expert.

It appears from a note in the Edinburgh programme that the Finnish National Ballet was founded in 1921, giving its first performance on January 17, 1922. The Ballet Master was George Gé (whose real name is Grönfeldt and is, I believe, Swedish) and he has been associated with the company from then onwards — apart from working in Paris and during a period between 1940 and about 1950 working with the Royal Swedish Ballet in Stockholm — and he remains to this day as Ballet Director of the Finnish National Ballet. Its first soloists apparently originated from the Maryinsky School in St. Petersburg, and since the last war these links with Russia have been resumed. The company, for example, produce *Swan Lake* in both the Bolshoi and the Royal Ballet versions, the latter being reproduced for them by Mary Skeaping.

In recent years — as in Sweden — the ballet has achieved greater prominence than before. Each year a dance festival, with a number of foreign stars and often foreign companies, is now given in Helsinki. Another recent development has been for the Finnish Ballet to start overseas touring, and it has already been seen in the rest of Scandinavia, Belgium, Spain, Poland, Estonia, Russia and West Germany. Soon after this Edinburgh engagement a large part of the company was due to embark on a tour of North America, Cuba and Mexico, for which Birgit Cullberg is mounting *Miss Julie* and a completely new work.

The company gave three different programmes in their Edinburgh visit, and although I, in fact, saw them at the end of the week in reverse order to that of their first appearance, I am reviewing in the sequence in which they were given at the Festival.

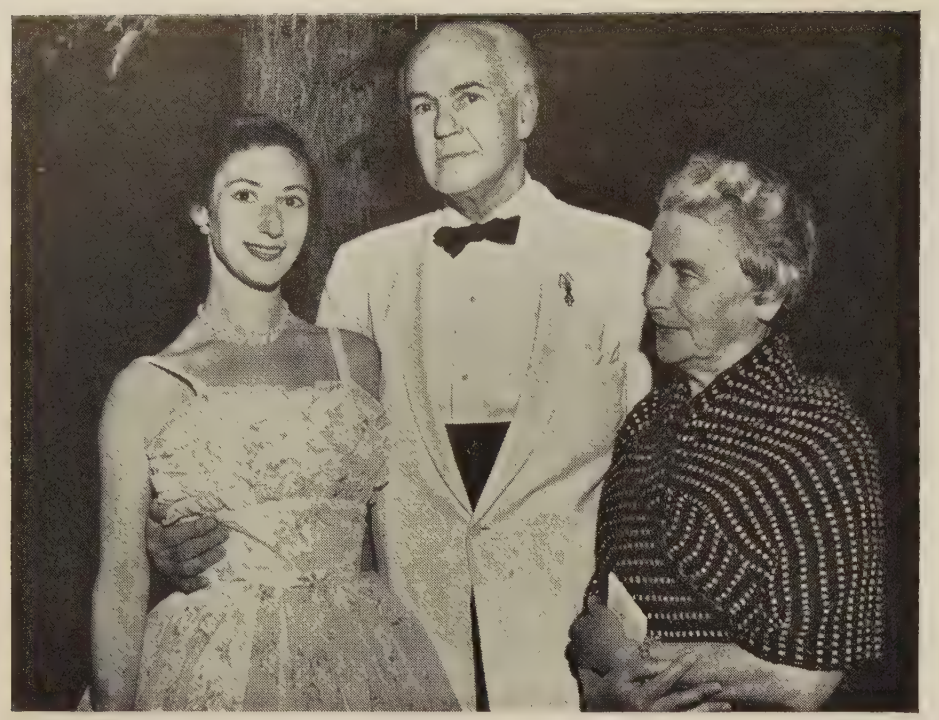
First Programme

ALMOST ever since I can remember people have been wagging their heads at me and saying: "Ah, but you should have seen *L'Epreuve d'Amour.*" While this was unanswerably true, as the ballet appeared to be out of the international repertory I could see little hope of repairing this gap in my education. However, everything comes to those who wait, and this production of *L'Epreuve d'Amour*—choreography by George Gé after Fokine — came to me. But how far after Fokine? That is the question?

A number of my senior colleagues gave me their opinion that it looked like a

Continued on page 33

CIRCLE OF ROSES: *Two scenes from a ballet based on Finnish folklore. In the lower picture are seen Lisa Taxell and Uno Onkinen in the principal rôles.*



GISELLE AND THE DIRECTORS: Beryl Goldwyn, who played the title rôle in Giselle *on Ballet Rambert's opening night at Jacob's Pillow, with Ted Shawn, Director of the Jacob's Pillow Festival, and Marie Rambert. This picture was taken at the party given after the opening night. Photo: Jack Mitchell.*

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID ABOUT—

Ballet Rambert in America

THE importation of the Ballet Rambert was the most ambitious venture made by Ted Shawn during the 27 years he has been presenting dance programmes for entertainment or education at Jacob's Pillow. One writer described Shawn as combining wit and charm with the poorest mouth in show business. Nevertheless, his gamble succeeded. The season of the company was a triumphant success, and most critics thought that it surpassed everything that had gone before at the Pillow. In view of the phenomenal success the company has enjoyed, many readers should be interested in the comments of the leading American critics published here.

Firstly, it should be pointed out that critics receive much more review space in the better-class papers than newspapers in Britain are prepared to devote to ballet. A striking feature of the notices was that the great majority of the critics were amazingly well-informed about the background and history of the Ballet Rambert. Flattery would defeat its own ends if we implied that the majority of British critics were equally knowledgeable about companies which visit London. The criticisms are serious, illuminating and generally well-written. There are few mistakes and none more amusing than one writer who insisted on terming the Queen of the Wilis "the Queen of the Fairies", and another who persisted in referring to "old Dr. Coppelia". Moreover, the critics appear to have a high opinion of the intelligence of their readers, and are obviously not at the mercy of editors or sub-editors who insist that notices shall be entertaining before anything else.

First Programme

THE opening programme, *Laiderette* and *Giselle,* received the most extravagant praise. Launching out in the opening sentences of his *New York Herald Tribune* article, Walter Terry writes: "The version *(Giselle),* stemming from the original choreography, is quite the best I have ever seen. The elusive aura of the Romantic Age of ballet was to be found not only in the exquisitely modelled lyrical passages of the second act, with its theme of poetic fantasy, but also in the peasant dances of Act I in which Mme. Rambert has retained the essential rustic flavour while brushing all the movements with the fundamental elegance of ballet. Furthermore," Terry goes on, "Rambert has done a superlative job of piecing in all of the dramatic and choreographic gaps which have existed in many other productions for so long. Gestures, steps, emotional responses, relationships among the characters, are all clearly and succinctly established. Thus the dramatic side sweeps along smoothly and, if I may say so about the fantasy, sensibly, in accord with Mme. Rambert's equally smooth and polished choreographic line.

"Début nerves," he declares, "were also noticeable, particularly in the first act, but they sped quickly and the Ballet Rambert was soon giving us a fine performance of *Giselle.* Beryl Goldwyn," the critic writes, warming to his work, "was excellent, and, for American audiences, a real discovery. She held to the romantic style but there was an incisiveness about her movements which made her characterisation exciting as well as decorative. Miss Goldwyn (he concludes), although she accomplished the Mad Scene effectively, was especially fine in the last act as the fleeting ghost of Giselle."

Richard Happel in *The Berkshire Eagle,* agrees with Walter Terry and writes of *Giselle* as "one of the most exquisite performances that you are likely to see in an age. . . . The Mad Scene, which can be seriously hammed up if not done with taste, came off beautifully. And, let's face it, as choreographed this scene is overlong, rather complicated, and if in incompetent hands may drag. These pitfalls were adroitly sidestepped by Beryl Goldwyn's downright mastery of the rôle."

A comparison made by *Time* is worth quoting. "Neither as grand in its effects nor as fiery in its execution as the Royal Ballet, the Rambert version *(Giselle)* demonstrated a warmly intimate style that emphasised reality instead of fantasy, dramatic clarity instead of pyrotechnics."

The verdict of the critic of *The Springfield Union* was that Beryl Goldwyn gave "an interpretation which certainly ranks with the best we have ever seen and it places her in a position among our ranking ballerinas". On the other hand, the critic of *The Hartford Times* had misgivings. "It is," he writes, "rather with the choreography itself that this reviewer has some hesitancy. Mme. Rambert abandons classical movements at times if something else tells the story better, and her dancers shuffle, walk and gesture at times quite unconventionally . . . a few of the first scenes bordered on the melodramatic."

Though almost all comments were favourable, Kenneth MacMillan's *Laiderette* foxed the critics, and a certain amount of confusion and bewilderment was apparent. Margaret Lloyd of *The Christian Science Monitor* had definite views. She referred to it as a modern mood piece, dim-lit and obscure . . . "an unfortunate choice for introducing a new company to a new audience". Lucette Aldous received excellent notices for her dancing in the name rôle.

In *The New York Herald Tribune,* Walter Terry writes: *"Laiderette,* a modern mood ballet with touches of the macabre and the sad, with some fine passages of highly original action such as MacMillan always comes up with and rather abrupt, wispy and unfinished airs about it, served well enough as a curtain raiser."

Second Programme

THE second programme, consisting of *Simple Symphony, Judgment of Paris, Death and the Maiden, Two Brothers* and *Gala Performance,* seemed to be received just a little less enthusiastically than the first. But it should be pointed out that here Mme. Rambert had selected works which were characteristic of the company at different stages of its development. John Martin, the celebrated critic of *The New York Times* since 1927, however, thought the second programme more rewarding because it showed more sides of the repertoire and because more dancers had opportunities.

Simple Symphony did not set the Berkshire, Mass., hills ablaze, although all critics aired such adjectives as "agreeable," "frolicsome," "pleasant" or "sassy".

Both *Judgment of Paris* and *Gala Performance* proved to be somewhat different in treatment from the near-burlesqued American versions. *Judgment of Paris* proved to be the worst received ballet, and, with the general exception of Gillian Martlew, the dancers were considered too young. Walter Terry wrote that he preferred the

greater maturity of characterisation which Ballet Theatre casts had brought to it.

Gala Performance also came up against the inevitable comparisons made with Ballet Theatre versions, but it fared a great deal better and it seemed that at least three-quarters of the critics found it delightful entertainment. Walter Terry again expressed reservations: "The playing could be referred to as 'subtle', but I suspect that 'underplaying' might be a more apt term. On the whole," he concludes, "the later versions, the Ballet Theatre versions, would seem to be considerably the better ones. But it is fun to see their beginnings."

Like *Giselle,* the press went for *Two Brothers* in a big way, and Norman Morrice was unanimously voted Tudor's successor. The following three quotations are probably the most revealing and tend to echo the views of British critics. Referring to the ballet in cautious, thoughtful sentences, John Martin writes in *The New York Times*: "The character of the girl is not perhaps as fully developed as it needs to be, and there are marks of youth and inexperience in much of the composition, but the creative miracle nevertheless occurs. It is a supremely honest, passionately felt and genuinely moving work. Mr. Morrice's personal performance," concludes John Martin, "is quite brilliant, not so much technically as in its thoroughly credible soul searchings and its moments of communication."

In *The Christian Science Monitor,* Margaret Lloyd brought in comparisons with Tudor, finding that the costumes reminded her of *Pillar of Fire* while the plot was faintly reminiscent to that of *Undertow.*

In *The New York Herald Tribune,* Walter Terry again demonstrated his ability to hit the target. "Mr. Morrice, aside from pouring both intensity and passion into his telling of the tale, has done a fine job, considering his youth and novice position choreographically. All right," he continues, "there are moments that border dangerously close to bathos, there are some rather frantic dramatics and the Tudor influence, intentional or not, is very apparent in the relating of gesture to dance. But these immaturities in no way obscure an impressive young talent and its eager and generally successful search for dramatic conviction and movement originality."

Third Programme

COPPELIA rounded off the season with a louder fanfare of superlatives. Reading these notices, however, one gets a general impression that the critics were impressed and surprised that *Coppélia* could be such delightful entertainment, but preferred the production of *Giselle.* A favourite line was astonishment expressed because no one dances the complete version in the United States. Lucette Aldous and Norman Morrice ran away with the honours, and again and again the latter's ability to suggest old age as Dr. Coppelius, while still in his early twenties, was remarked upon.

Walter Terry judged *Coppélia* to be the most wholly satisfying of the productions. In his *New York Herald Tribune* notice he writes: "The visual impact is instantly attractive. But more important, Madame Rambert . . . has left no loose ends lying about. . . . The dramatic line, the pertinent jokes, the characterisations are all beautifully projected through appropriate gesture, sometimes in the form of quaint mime, again in straightforward acting. . . . If the production itself was pure enchantment, the performance of Miss Aldous was its match."

He continues: "Throughout, her performance was characterised by her sparkling humour which made you literally fall in love with her. . . . Miss Aldous certainly belongs to the great Swanildas of our day."

He ends his notice: "Yes, this *Coppélia* was really something to see, and if the Ballet Rambert had done nothing more than bring this production (and, of course, it brought many other fine things) it would have made the season . . . an unforgettable event."

Summing-up

It should be emphasised that a number of quotations have been taken from notices which contain an element of controversy or criticism, or which reflect views differing from those generally held here. This may give the impression that the critics have not been as enthusiastic as we suggested at the outset. But there has also been an immense spate of passionately written notices lathered with the most effusive praise.

Although *Giselle, Two Brothers* and *Coppélia* were considered to be artistic and theatrical triumphs worthy of only the best superlatives, the real star of the season was Madame Rambert herself, who received a tremendous ovation at the end of the opening performance. She could not have been in better form at her "personal appearances" and lectures, and journalists variously referred to her visit as "one of the most important events in the annals of American dance" and "an historic occasion".

In his pre-curtain speech to open the Festival, Ted Shawn, the Director of Jacob's Pillow, disclaimed any intention of being or becoming an impresario. He stated that he had introduced only those companies and artists whom he felt had artistic significance and should have been seen in America, but who were being ignored by commercial managements.

Shawn's policy received generous support from the press, and an unusually large number of critics demonstrated their ability to point out that there was no reason why the Ballet Rambert's artistic qualities should preclude it being a commercial success. Typical of this is the attitude of the critic of *The Springfield Union* : "It is difficult to understand why the company has not been brought here before because the performance which opened its stay showed that here is a company having unusually fine artistic qualities and style and at least three dancers of noble proportions."

Even further goes *The Springfield Republican,* which says: "The result was an artistic success comparable to, if not surpassing, that of the visit of the Bolshoi Ballet." *The Albany Times* considered that if Shawn never brings any other import to his theatre, he can retire on the laurels earned on the Rambert opening night.

John Martin felt that the outstanding quality of its product was the vitality with which Madame Rambert brings out the best in her young dancers and choreographers. He expressed a perceptive note of doubt rather in the on-the-one-hand-this, on-the-other-hand-that style, by declaring that on such short acquaintance it was difficult to decide whether there were any artists in the present company of the calibre of Ashton, Markova or Tudor. He writes: "This department, however, would put its money, if it had any, on two of (its) youngsters without hesitation. One is Lucette Aldous, and the other is primarily, though not exclusively, a choreographer, Norman Morrice." In describing Lucette Aldous, he says: "Her body is well placed, she has excellent feet and legs, and she adapts herself admirably to the theatrical situation. In addition, she happens to be dainty, pretty as a picture and brimming with charm."

Walter Terry writes: "These dancers are not mere puppets whom Madame Rambert manipulates with strings. They have their own basic talents and Miss Aldous in particular is obviously a young artist with a strong and exact technique and first-rate acting skill. But the point is that their director has an unusual power to release, instruct and mould the dancing gifts of youth." He then goes on to quote a conversation he had with Madame Rambert, who referred to the occasion when Violette Verdy danced with the company. According to Rambert, Verdy experienced no nervousness at all, so disciplined was the troupe, not only in its execution of formal steps but also in its identification with the characters. "I couldn't be nervous," said Verdy, "for as Giselle, I was on stage with my sisters, and friends, my mother. Why, I was at home."

Although Lucette Aldous seemed to be the dancer most favoured by John Martin and Walter Terry, there were some wry comments from a number of critics who regretted that no other vehicle than *Giselle* was provided so that they could determine the extent of Beryl Goldwyn's artistry. Lucette Aldous, who danced no less than four principal rôles, received the highest total of review inches. One critic declared that she danced the way little girls dream of dancing.

For sheer versatility in widely dissimilar rôles, Norman Morrice was praised for his Dr. Coppelius, Hilarion, and the younger brother in his own ballet.

All the principals received favourable notices, but those who appeared in key rôles in *Giselle, Coppélia* and *Two Brothers,* as may be guessed, received the most mentions. They were Beryl Goldwyn, Lucette Aldous, Gillian Martlew, Christopher Lyall, Norman Morrice, John O'Brien and John Chesworth. The only conspicuous exception to this general ruling was that of June Sandbrook, who received many tributes for her performance in *Death and the Maiden,* although she too was mentioned for her Dawn *variation* in *Coppélia.* Elsa Recagno, however, as the Red Ballerina in *Gala Performance,* was definitely not liked, although she was praised for her dancing in other rôles.

John Martin, who admired Beryl Goldwyn, as "a dancer of temperament", Lucette Aldous, Gillian Martlew and June Sandbrook, concluded: "But it is not altogether fair to shop about this way in a company one knows so slightly." In *The Springfield Republican,* Wayne C. Smith commented: "The company does not have a star system, as each of the dancers is trained to a degree of artistry and technical ability so as to properly interpret solo rôles. But in the persons of Beryl Goldwyn, Lucette Aldous, Gillian Martlew, Christopher Lyall and John O'Brien, the Ballet Rambert has dancers who are the equals of many of the stars in better-known companies."

As Walter Terry covered the season more comprehensively than anyone else, he shall have the last word. "It would be foolish and inaccurate to say that the youthful artists are equals to more experienced stars we have witnessed and cherished. . . . But what they may lack of that performing grandeur which comes only with maturity, they replace with spirit, urgency and that eagerness which is the special province of youth."

Ballet Perspectives : 14

The Three-Cornered Hat *(Part 1)*

by CLIVE BARNES

DESIGNER AND CHOREOGRAPHER: Picasso talking to Leonide Massine when both were in Italy in 1917. It was at this time that they were working on their first collaboration in Parade. *After this they worked together on* The Three-Cornered Hat *and* Pulcinella.

THE most successful Spanish ballet of all time, *The Three-Cornered Hat,* started unexpectedly germinating in the July of 1874, although its seeds, planted in the dusty soil of Spain itself, are of far greater antiquity. The story of the Miller, his beautiful wife, and their outwitting of the lecherous Governor of that part of Andalusia where they lived, had existed in ballads and folk tales long before, but it was in that summer of 1874 that Pedro Antonio de Alarcón produced and published his version of the tale in the novel *The Three-Cornered Hat.* A witty, lively book, its picture of Spanish village life right at the beginning of the 19th century almost called out aloud for theatrical translation, and, in fact, as early as 1890 the composer Hugo Wolf was already contemplating using it as the basis for the opera, which entitled *The Corregidor* was eventually completed in 1895. If the theme could attract a "foreigner" like the Austrian Wolf, what could be more natural than for it to appeal to Manuel de Falla, a young composer of the fast-developing Spanish nationalist school.

In 1904 when the Madrid Real Academia de Bellas Arts promoted an open competition for a national Spanish opera, Falla and his librettist, Carlos Fernandez Shaw, also considered using the novel for a one-act opera, but curiously — remembering the earlier work — the novelist's heirs refused their permission and Falla eventually won the competition with *La Vida Breve.* Some ten years later the famous Spanish dramatist Martínez Sierra came to Falla with the suggestion that he should write a "ballet" for the gypsy dancer Pastora Imperio, and this collaboration led to *El Amor Brujo,* produced by Pastora in Madrid in 1915. But Falla had still not forgotten *The Three-Cornered Hat,* and in 1917 he and Sierra used the theme for a two-act ballet pantomime called *El Corregidor y la Molinera,* which was produced with some success at the Eslava Theatre in Madrid.

During the war years Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes made Spain practically into a temporary headquarters, and both Diaghilev and Massine wished to produce a Spanish ballet that would not only reflect Spanish life but also incorporate something of the immeasurably rich dance material they found around them in every café, cabaret and square. The Russian Ballet's first excursion into this field was Massine's "pavane" *Las Meninas,* first given on 21 August, 1916, in San Sebastian, with music by Gabriel Fauré, scenery by Carlo Socrate, and costumes by José-Maria Sert. This did not prove very successful, even though it was intermittently revived and was eventually, in 1928, even shown in London. But this work, largely inspired by the paintings of Velasquez, was dedicated more to Spanish art than Spanish life, and it must have become obvious that if the choreographic vitality of the Spanish dance were to be transferred into the ballet, a necessary preliminary would be a score by a Spanish composer.

How Diaghilev's choice fell on Falla is not quite certain. William S. Lieberman has recorded (in the issue of "Dance Index": *Picasso and the Ballet)* that Diaghilev saw in Madrid the production of Falla's *El Corregidor y la Molinera,* yet I have not been able to find any confirmation of this. The more usual account is that given by Lionel Salter in *The Decca Book of Ballets*: "He [Diaghilev] had enquired about the possibility of adapting *Nights in the Gardens of Spain,* but Falla was against it. Instead he promised to find another subject, and when he played Diaghilev some of the *Corregidor* score the latter was delighted with it."

The original pantomime had been scored for a chamber orchestra, and Falla undertook to re-orchestrate his work completely. According to Cyril Beaumont *(Complete Book of Ballets)* Falla "added the *Farruca* and also the magnificent *Jota* that brings the ballet to its close". He also inserted a new dance for the Corregidor, which was intended to come immediately after that gentleman's stealthy entrance in the second scene, when he is bent on capturing the virtue of the Miller's Wife. This music was in fact taken from a very early *zarzuela* by Falla which had never been produced, called *La Casa de Tócame Roque.* Although this music is still to be found in the complete score of the ballet and (writers of record sleeve notes, please note) has been twice recorded without comment, this stately dance utilising *pizzicato* strings has, so far as I am aware, never been part of Massine's ballet: certainly it has not been seen in any post-Diaghilev production, and to the best of my knowledge the dance was jettisoned before the ballet's first performance, probably because it held up the dramatic action at a vital juncture.

Alarcón's novel is an extremely involved piece of narrative writing, with innumerable asides, digressions, and quite a few secondary characters — such as the Corregidor's Bailiff Weasel. Sierra's original scenario for the pantomime was apparently almost equally complicated, but for the Diaghilev production this was trimmed and cut down to the story we know today, although even now one of the ballet's few faults lies in the comparative complexity of its narrative.

For the designer of the new work, Diaghilev had to look no further than the young Spanish painter Pablo Picasso — then coming into prominence — who had already collaborated with the Ballet in 1917 on the Cocteau/Satie surrealist extravaganza, *Parade,* and had recently married a member of Diaghilev's own *corps de ballet,* Olga Koklova.

Yet the fundamental problem confronting Diaghilev in presenting the Spanish ballet which had become so near to his heart, must have been nothing to do with either music or scenario or designs, but the huge difficulty of translating the Spanish dance into the terms of ballet. Of course, Spanish dancing, of a type, was no stranger to classical ballet; for years it had been used in classical *divertissements,* and Petipa in particular had evolved a complete, stylised form which can still be seen to perfection in the Sergueff production of the Spanish dance in the Royal Ballet's *Swan Lake.* But between this and the style of dancing that

was required for *The Three-Cornered Hat* was a gap as wide and as deep as Andalusia's own great river, the Guadalquivir. The gap was bridged by a young man called Felix.

The story of Felix is one of the great tragedies of ballet, like that of Emma Livry or the little Bozzachi. Felix, whose real name was apparently Felix Fernández Garcia, was born in 1897 and died in 1941. In 1917 Diaghilev engaged him to teach Spanish dancing to Massine and certain members of the company. A man of unstable temperament, he seemed to be under the impression that he was going to create the leading rôle in the forthcoming production. Eventually it became obvious even to his by now seriously deranged mind that this was not the case. How much this shock contributed to his final mental breakdown can never be known, but one evening in the May of 1919 he was discovered by a policeman doing a wild dance on the altar steps of a church in South London. On May 13 of that year he was admitted to a mental hospital in Epsom, where he subsequently died nearly 22 years later. It is a terrible story, in certain respects seeming to parallel that of Nijinsky, and some commentators have attributed the tragedy to Diaghilev and Massine, while one or two others have gone so far as to suggest that it was Felix rather than Massine who was really responsible for the choreography of *The Three-Cornered Hat.*

To try to sift the truth from the legends about Felix is far from simple, but it is probably best to start by enquiring how Diaghilev first engaged him. Beaumont (in the *Complete Book)* says: "During a visit to Seville, Diaghilev visited a gypsy dance festival; one of the dancers, a youth known as Felix, impressed him greatly . . . and [he] engaged him to teach his steps to Massine." Arnold Haskell (in *Diaghileff*) gives a similar version, as does Serge Lifar, who (in *Diaghilev*) produces a somewhat more circumstantial account: "Some time in 1917, Diaghilev and Massine happened to be witnessing a competition for Spanish dancers in one of the squares of Seville. . . . Suddenly a youthful, wild-looking Andalusian pushed his way to the front, rolled up his shirt-sleeves and the legs of his trousers and — turning as pale as death and clenching his teeth — he began to dance the *Farucca.* It was Felix, and, such was his performance, that there and then the verdict acclaimed him the best dancer in Spain." In these three accounts it will be noted that the implication is that Felix was an amateur dancer before his engagement by Diaghilev.

Grigoriev (in *The Diaghilev Ballet: 1909-1929)* gives a quite different story of Felix's first engagement: "As for dancers, he [Diaghilev] was persuaded that, to obtain real authenticity, the principal parts should be taken by Spaniards. He therefore began a search for suitable artists, and pitched first on Felix Fernández, a most remarkable young dancer from Seville. As soon as we arrived in Madrid, he invited the whole company to the theatre, to see Fernández in his *répertoire.*"

Grigoriev's version finds most convincing support from Lydia Sokolova in an article called *A Pair of Castanets,* which appeared in June, 1950, in Richard Buckle's magazine *Ballet.* Sokolova, who has here written by far the fullest and most interesting account of the Felix episode, says: "Both Diaghilev and Massine used to visit every type of theatre and café to find someone who would inspire the choreographer and give him all the knowledge that was necessary for the production of a Spanish ballet: finally, in a tiny theatre in a back street of Madrid they believed they had found the man for whom they were searching." The essential difference between the accounts of Grigoriev and Sokolova (both of whom were actually with the company at the time) and the accounts of the others, is that they suggest that Felix was a professional dancer before he even met Diaghilev. What, to my mind, makes the truth of this certain, is that Sokolova tells a variant on the story of the "dance festival in Seville" that sounds undeniably authentic. In her story this took place after Felix had joined the company; a certain unknown gypsy boy had given a sensational display of Spanish dancing, when during "the enthusiastic applause that followed this dancer's performance, Felix leaped into the middle of the room and danced as he had never done before".

So it can be seen that Felix was not just a talented local boy brought in to teach Massine something about folk dancing (which is the impression quite often conveyed), but a well-known, if only of local fame, professional dancer who actually joined the Diaghilev *corps de ballet.* It also seems quite likely that he was *actually engaged to dance the Miller in the ballet.* The quotation from Grigoriev given above appears to make this clear, and Grigoriev (the italics are mine) continues: "Next, having secured Fernández, Diaghilev began looking for *a girl to partner him*; and found one who would have done so admirably in Zelita Astolfi." In the event, "to Diaghilev's great disappointment," she refused to leave Spain. Later, talking of the ballet's first performance, Grigoriev recalls that "Diaghilev still regretted that the chief parts in the ballet should not be danced by Spaniards". Some years later Diaghilev got part of his wish, when the Miller's Wife was danced by the Spanish Maria Dalbaicin. She proved a failure. (Incidentally, other genuinely Spanish dancers have also appeared in Massine's ballet at different times, including Argentinita, Antonio and Mariemma. None of them appears to have had much success.)

Sokolova, although noting that "Felix thought he was going to be world famous", never suggests that it was ever the intention for him to dance in the ballet. On the contrary, she says: "With his [Felix's] excited and imaginative mind and not realising the importance of Massine, Felix *began to be convinced* that he himself was going to dance the principal part in the ballet." (Once again the italics are mine.) Lifar, on the other hand, supports Grigoriev. He says: "Massine and Felix were collaborating together on the production of *The Three-Cornered Hat,* in which the Spaniard was to dance the famous *Farucca.* The posters, however, bore only Massine's name as the ballet's creator."

Was it originally Diaghilev's idea that Felix should dance the lead in the ballet? On the whole, I think it probably was. If so, the reason for the plan's abandonment has probably been given by Sokolova. At the same time as *The Three-Cornered Hat* was being prepared, rehearsals were also taking place for *La Boutique Fantasque,* which was to have its première some weeks before the Spanish ballet. Diaghilev, according to Sokolova, wanted Felix to dance the Tarantella with her — possibly, although she does not suggest it — as compensation for having the rôle of the Miller taken away from him. Sokolova says: "It took Massine many rehearsals to teach him a concrete, set number, as he was accustomed to doing his own improvisations which, brilliant though many of them were, yet could not be fitted into a ballet." After seeing one of Felix's rehearsals, Diaghilev "realised at last that he could not give such an important part to so unreliable an artist." Eventually it was Woizikowsky, originally intended for the rôle of the Shop Assistant, who danced the Tarantella with Sokolova.

The question remains, how much was the choreography of the ballet due to Felix? Have, as some writers hint, the history books done an injustice in attributing the entire credit for the ballet to Massine? Serge Lifar is fairly dogmatic on the question. Not content with the reference to "collaboration" quoted above, in his *History of Russian Ballet,* Lifar goes even further, describing the choreography as being "supervised by Felix, Massine's Spanish dancing teacher". Sokolova, however, puts the thing in better perspective, when she describes the Miller's Dance as "a combination of steps and movements inspired by the dance that Felix did that night in Seville". I feel that the important word here is "inspired", and this seems to be in keeping with what we know of Massine's choreographic method. I have heard, only verbally, a very similar story told of Massine's *Cakewalk* in *Union Pacific,* and I have also talked to a man who helped Massine with the Scottish dances in *Donald of the Burthens.*

The idea that this naïve boy Felix, even if he were a performer of genius, could have given anything more than the basic raw material for the ballet is quite unthinkable. In any case the work shows all the stylistic hallmarks of Massine choreography, and quite a lot of the detailing would appear to have been inspired — and this too is typical of Massine — directly from the Alarcón novel. For example the novelist describes the Corregidor as having a "grotesque carriage", with "a manner of walking which was all his own — a rocking of himself from one side to another and backwards and forwards which can only be described by the absurd formula that he seemed to be lame in both legs at once". To anyone who has ever seen the ballet this will instantly appear almost as choreographic notation !

Finally there is the much discussed question of what share of the responsibility Diaghilev and Massine should take for Felix's eventual tragedy. Was it cruel to remove him from his natural environment? Perhaps so, yet he was a professional dancer, and I have no doubt that Diaghilev at first believed that he was giving him the opportunity to become world-famous. Sokolova, who probably knew him better than most of the company, stresses that he was subject to mental oddity right from the beginning. Yet to Grigoriev he was "a delightful young man, much liked by everyone . . . no one had guessed he was on the verge of a nervous collapse". Nor does it seem unlikely that in the excitable world of the Ballets Russes such mental symptoms as he did show could quite easily have been put down to "temperament". Perhaps he was used tactlessly, but the circumstances were obviously not clearly understood by either Massine or Diaghilev. Furthermore, there is not a piece of evidence to support the conjecture that Felix's mental collapse was brought about by *The Three-Cornered Hat* — he might, after all, equally well have gone mad in his café in Madrid. One last point of fact: It is sometimes implied that Felix actually danced in the first performance of the ballet, but this is not so. He was apparently allotted a minor part in the work — I should guess he was intended to dance one of the two Fools — but his breakdown came two months before the first performance.

Continued next month.

curtain up!

DOLIN'S CHOICE: At a ceremony held at the Ballet Exhibition at the Army & Navy Stores — and in the presence of Tamara Karsavina, Alicia Markova and Dame Ninette de Valois amongst others — Anton Dolin announced the three recipients of the 1959 Anton Dolin Award. Here they are: Frederick Ashton for his services to British choreography. Nadia Nerina for having shown the greatest progress of any British ballerina in the past year, and John Gilpin for his contribution to British male dancing. Fox Photo.

And she stayed on

IT is the unexpected gesture that makes people popular. Everyone knows by now what an exhausting tour of Canada was undertaken by the Queen and Prince Philip during June and July and when they went to see the Royal Winnipeg Ballet dance in the Winnipeg Arena on July 24, they were only scheduled to see one ballet — *Grasslands*. Owing to a heavy day which had started in Portage la Prairie at 9 a.m., the royal party arrived 20 minutes late. After *Grasslands*, the lights went up and everyone prepared to see the Queen leave. However, she did not move and decided to stay and see the final ballet — *The Comedians* — much to the delight and surprise of everyone. Afterwards she wrote a most friendly letter thanking the company and saying how much she had enjoyed the performance, she also sent a personally autographed photograph of herself and Prince Philip in memory of the occasion.

This performance also marked the first appearance of former Royal Ballet dancer David Shields as a leading dancer in the Winnipeg company.

Retirement from Sunday

FOR over nine years, Cyril Beaumont has graced the pages of the *Sunday Times* with his criticisms of ballet. At the end of August he retired and his place has been taken by Richard Buckle, formerly editor of *Ballet* and critic on the rival Sunday paper, *The Observer*.

Mr. Beaumont's absence leaves a very real gap in ballet criticism. His style perhaps was easy to parody and his tendency to compare everything with the golden days of ballet in the first quarter of this century sometimes caused people to think that he was out of touch with modern ballet, but he was always scrupulously fair, open-minded and unbiased. It is a pity that these three virtues are noticeably absent in the work of so many of today's critics.

It could be said that every critic who writes on ballet today owes this fact to Cyril Beaumont. His research and remarkable number of books on all branches of ballet's art have smoothed the way for them. He was a pioneer at a time when ballet criticism of any consequence in England was virtually non-existent. His innumerable admirers all over the world hope that now he will have more time to add to his vast output of ballet literature which remain in our library shelves permanently and when most other ballet books have been given away or used to swell a books-for-pulp campaign.

Franco-British Exchange

THE new director of the Paris Opéra, M. Julien, has got down to his new post with some sort of an atomic bang. Not only has he swept away many old customs which were holding back the company from becoming the noble company which is its historic right, but I hear that he also has ideas about cross-channel exchanges. This has obvious advantages since it permits both the Paris Opéra and Covent Garden to show a larger repertory at comparatively little expense — it will also add gusto to the rather stuck-in-the-mud performances which both companies have not been enjoying of late. It appears that the first exchanges will be of operas but there is a rumour that Skibine's recent production of *Daphnis and Chloë* may be seen at Covent Garden as part of a triple bill of Ravel's music. This means presumably that Ashton's version will go to Paris.

All this is fine but I hope it does not mean that Covent Garden is going to drop for ever its excellent custom, an annual event up to a few years back, of letting Britain see at least one full season by a visiting company each year.

Just one curtain

THE recent death of Sir Jacob Epstein, the painter and sculptor whose works have caused a storm almost continuously since his Rima was frequently tarred and feathered in Hyde Park during the 'twenties, might not appear on the face of it to have much to do with ballet. In actual fact he was invited to do the scenery and costumes for Keith Lester's *David* for the Markova-Dolin Ballet in 1935 and in which Dolin gave such a remarkable performance in the title rôle. Unfortunately Epstein was so busy that he was unable to accept this invitation but he agreed to contribute the drop curtain and extremely impressive it was.

Lights up in Bow Street

WHEN Covent Garden published their first annual report at the beginning of this year, the Chairman, Lord Drogheda, revealed his ambition to see another row of chandeliers round the Opera House above the Balcony. Lord Drogheda, I may say, has a quite forceful personality which means that he usually gets his way in the end. He has, and now with the aid of private generosity, including a gift from the Queen Mother, there the chandeliers are and very nice they look too except to the amphitheatre patrons whose view they obstruct. When the season opened they received a lot of press comment but I was amused to see that the new lighting equipment on the stage went apparently unremarked by all my colleagues. Which probably goes to prove that however good your lighting apparatus, it's the people using it that really matter.

Royal Injuries

EVERYONE watching the rise of Canadian dancer Lynn Seymour is sorry for her this month. A foot injury prevented her from taking part in the Royal Ballet's combined season at Covent Garden and also robbed her of her first leading rôle in a new ballet, Howard's *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, when it was

THEY DANCED FOR THE QUEEN: Two English dancers, Sonia Taverner and David Shields, on the steps of the Royal Box in the Winnipeg Arena on the day of the performance given for the Queen and Prince Philip by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Both dancers have recently left England to join the Canadian company.

given there. In the long run, however, I think she has no need to worry and before she next appears at Covent Garden it is more than likely that she will have danced the Aurora rôle in *The Sleeping Beauty*. This production, which is being mounted for the touring section of the company, will be given only in the largest theatres during their autumn tour.

Margot Fonteyn also sustained an injury while she was rehearsing *Sylvia* for the combined season. She pulled a muscle but refused to back out of her engagement. Also typical of her, she would have no excuses made for her in the way of an announcement. All very praiseworthy and obviously a fine example to the younger generation, but it was a pity that many of her admirers, not knowing the circumstance, were rather disappointed in her performance, which was good by most standards but not quite what one expects from a ballerina of Fonteyn's status.

Calamity, calamity

WHEN a ballet performance gets a jinx on it, things start to go wrong in a big way. A few years ago I remember a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* in which mishaps piled on each other in such a way that it started to resemble a scene from the Marx Brothers' *Night at the Opera*. During a recent *Sylvia* performance things got out of hand in a rather similar way. It had all been going nicely until a few minutes before the end. Then Orion, wrestling with Aminta, got into a tighter grip than usual, turned completely upside down — and off came both his hat and his wig! Luckily Bryan Ashbridge has a thick head of hair, so things did not look so bad. But then Julia Farron, as Diana, lifted her bow to take aim at him and it fell apart in her hands, leaving her with two bits of wood dangling awkwardly at either end of the string. Resisting the temptation to lasso Orion, she flung the pieces behind her — and they wound themselves neatly around the neck of one of the *corps de ballet* girls. Luckily the ballet ended before anything else had time to go astray.

Farewell before thirty

THE retirement of Anne Heaton because of an increasingly troublesome foot condition will leave a sad gap among our dramatic dancers. It is difficult to believe that her dancing career lasted only thirteen years in all and that she is still under thirty. She was the first outstanding dancer of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet on its formation and has played almost every type of rôle in the repertory. After several years with the Covent Garden company she latterly returned to her original company as its ballerina. Her last appearance with the Royal Ballet took place on September 2 when she gave a magnificent portrayal of the Betrayed Girl in *The Rake's Progress* and appeared to be at the very height of her power. After this performance she received a great ovation from the audience, a large number of beautiful bouquets and took many solo calls. Many of her long-standing admirers combined to present her with an inscribed silver cigarette box after this performance. I know that readers will join me in the hope that, after she has had a really long rest and sufficient time to make a full recovery, she will be back again dancing for us. We can ill-afford to lose artists such as she.

Safety first

ALMOST every week there are stories, in the more sensational newspapers, of dancers in difficulty in foreign places. Even recently four girls in Famagusta found that as well as dancing they were supposed to have drinks and improper relations with clients. There are also many tales of woe from dancers who found that they were stranded in some remote place with no money to get home. This is all very sad, but most of them have only themselves to blame as this just need not happen if they had first consulted Actors Equity. This organisation has all the machinery for safeguarding people taking jobs abroad providing Equity have a chance of vetting any contract *before* it is signed. If a deposit is placed covering two weeks' salary and the return fare and providing the artist is not trying to sign up with an organisation that Equity know to be on their "black list" then artists can go abroad without any fear of getting stranded or getting caught up with a disreputable concern. Even if dancers cannot go to this very slight amount of trouble you would think that their parents might if they have any feeling for the safety of their children.

The overseas organiser who deals with this now is Matt Winston. As a dancer with the Winnipeg and Sadler's Wells Ballets and in many famous musicals he should know all the answers for dancers as well as anyone.

New Home for S.B.C.

THE Sunday Ballet Club has always appeared at Wyndham's Theatre, but their next performance, on November 1, will be at the theatre which backs on to it — the New. Works by Norman Dixon (also choreographing the opera *May Night* for the Welsh National Opera), Ronald Yerrel and John Broome are promised in addition to others not yet specified. Jim Ranger, co-director with Frances Sitwell, has just become engaged to Joy Leslie.

Page promotion

WITH the end of the Royal Ballet joint season at Covent Garden and the opening of the short suburban tour by the main company, came a new promotion to ballerina status. As we predicted a month or two ago the latest soloist to be promoted is Annette Page. She will be a joint Junior Ballerina with Anya Linden. The Senior Ballerinas are Nadia Nerina and Svetlana Beriosova. Fonteyn is, of course, a guest prima ballerina *assoluta*.

happy birthday to...

		October
Nadia Nerina	The Royal Ballet	21
Alan Woodard	London's Festival Ballet	21
John Field	Royal Ballet Organisation	21
Pamela Hart	London's Festival Ballet	23
Shirley Grahame	The Royal Ballet	24
Diane Elesmore	London's Festival Ballet	26
Norman McDowell		26
Patricia Neary	Canadian National Ballet	27
Elaine Fifield		28
Louis Godfrey	London's Festival Ballet	29
Patricia Thorogood	The Royal Ballet	29
Serge Golovine	De Cuevas International Ballet	30
Janet Overton	London's Festival Ballet	30
Michael Maule	Ballets U.S.A.	31
		November
Selena Wylie	London's Festival Ballet	1
Audrey Harman	Royal Ballet Organisation	2
Lawrence Adams	Canadian National Ballet	2
Carmen Mathe	De Cuevas International Ballet	3
Antonio		4
Donald McAlpine	London's Festival Ballet	4
Violetta Elvin	In retirement in Italy	4
Elaine Crevier	De Cuevas International Ballet	9
Dianne Richards	London's Festival Ballet	13
Frances Greenwood	Canadian National Ballet	13
Antonio Gades	Pilar Lopez Ballet Espagnol	16
David Adams	Canadian National Ballet	16
Dimitri Romanoff	American Ballet Theatre	17
Anne Heaton		19
Hylda Zinkin	The Royal Ballet	19
Leila Zorina	Canadian National Ballet	19
Marilyn Burr	London's Festival Ballet	20
Ram Gopal		20
Don Gillies	Choreographer in Canada	20
Margrethe Schanne	Royal Danish Ballet	21
Susan Alexander	The Royal Ballet	23
Dalton Davis	London's Festival Ballet	24

Dancer You Will Know

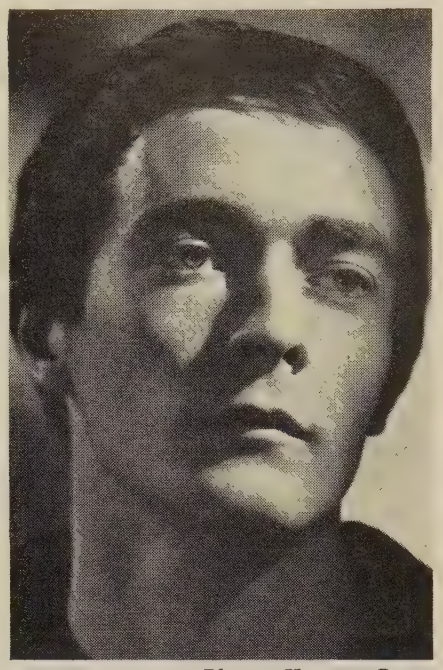


Photo : Houston Rogers.

RICHARD FARLEY

BORN on September 26, 1935, in Bournemouth. He first started to dance in 1946, studying with his mother at the Longley School of Dancing in Staines. In 1950 he joined the Royal Ballet School, where he remained until he was called up for the Army in 1954. On his release in 1956 he entered the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, being promoted to the rank of junior soloist in the summer of this year.

Creations : Leading part in La Valse. *Rôles : Florestan and Cavalier in* The Sleeping Beauty; Czardas *and* Pas de Six *in* Swan Lake; *Apollo in* Sylvia; *Elihu in* Job; *Country Boy in* La Fête Etrange; *Lover in* Miracle in the Gorbals; Pas de Trois *in* Danses Concertantes.

THERE are few more contradictory dancers in the Royal Ballet than Richard Farley, for at his best he can be marvellously promising, while at his worst he can look even awkward on stage. Well built and good looking, by every right he should be outstandingly successful in classical ballet, yet in fact he too often looks just ill at ease.

One might think that he had no stage presence, but suddenly he can give a performance like that of the Country Boy in *La Fête Etrange*, sensitively acted and effortlessly projected over the footlights. His classical dancing is sometimes disturbingly careless, yet here and there you get glints of a really fine talent.

Potentially, on the slender evidence of his performances up to now. Farley has it in him to become an outstanding dancer. But at the moment he seems to be held back slightly, quite possibly by nervousness. This is more than a pity for he has every grounds for confidence, and when he finds the right parts to suit his rather unusual talents he could easily emerge from his shell to become one of the most valuable artists of the Royal Ballet.

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET at Covent Garden

The halves joined

IT'S a pity that the first night of the new season turned out to be so tepid an occasion. There was little lift or excitement, and not a trace of first night nerves. Rather the reverse was evident; first night complacency stimulated, no doubt, by the choice of programme. Look at it. *The Lady and the Fool* and *Mam'zelle Angot* on one bill, with *The Burrow* to eke the evening out. Its lopsidedness was somewhat baffling.

And although the dancing personnel numbered no less than 118, including two guest artists, one of whom is, incidentally, Fonteyn, true integration had not taken place. The key step towards this was postponed for *Swan Lake*, three nights later, when both companies really amalgamated for the first time.

The Lady and the Fool received no more than an average performance. Its garish lemon and cyclamen décor jeered as maliciously as ever. But how difficult it is for the dancers to bring its characters to life: they are purely stock and barely even symbols of anything!

Beriosova as La Capricciosa gave a capable performance, although it could not be considered to be one of her very best. She suggests that she has allied herself to the Fool out of genuine love. While this portrait may be theoretically valid, it is a difficult one to sustain, principally because the character is flimsy and as inconsistent as her name indicates.

Gary Burne's Signor Midas may be the best so far. While his dancing is rougher than Blair's, he brings an air of gadfly glamour to his sketch of the *parvenu* host. His squirming and obsequious poses suggest a dislocated hip, but they are quite amusing, as is his dramatic manoeuvring in and out of the strutting labryinth of *corps de ballet* boys. Ronald Hynd was a touching and picturesque Clown, although he may over-indulge an appetite for self-pity.

Derek Rencher does not seem to have come to grips with the Prince. However sharp his interpretative powers may be, I doubt if he, or anyone else, will ever make much of the part because Cranko has misrepresented the character. The qualities don't add up. The meditative, melancholy and arrogant aspects conflict with his most passionate and embarrassing solo. With its sweeping *ports de bras* and floor poses, it looks as though it has been concocted for a ballerina with a flair for *plastique* style.

Anne Heaton's dancing in *The Burrow* is still impressive, although, if it is not *lèse majesté* to say so, her interpretation fails to hold me transfixed in admiration. It is very, very theatrical, perhaps now even too slick.

The rôle itself is curious. Why has MacMillan focused so much attention on one woman? Is she meant to be isolated from the rest — a despairing cry trapped in a wilderness of tension? Or does she represent a sum of the other characters, for whatever they do, she tends to echo it in greater intensity?

Perhaps her case has been overstated, for there is no evident balance between fear and reason. Although the keyed-up situation does not encourage contrast, she robs herself of opportunities in this direction by pulling out all the stops at the outset. Interpreted on a more sensitive, subtler plane, the rôle could move one deeply. As it is, the only perceptive effect of such frenetic activity is to give the character a certain strident fascination.

While acting like mad handicaps characterisation, the difficult and distorted, often over-choreographed passages virtually demand that she dances flat out. She goes through the movements with brilliant confidence — whether she be mangled by outstretched arms, flung into sudden collapses, or trussed up in the arms of the boys, writhing above their heads.

Gordon Aitken's new Outcast is a little too deliberately pathetic to win my sympathy, and yet his performance isn't a bad one. Donald MacLeary, Donald Britton and Noreen Sopwith still stand out for making their rôles so vivid and lifelike.

I hope the boys in the Touring Company are not those who danced in Australia. They are an undisciplined bunch. Not being able to beam ingratiatingly in *The Burrow*, they vacillate between grinning hysterically and trying not to drape themselves in classical poses.

Striking as *The Burrow* is, I imagine, as do many others, that it would have been magnificently effective on a smaller stage with its action concentrated on fewer dancers and carefully drawn character studies replacing the thumbnail sketches. MacMillan has certainly acquired a fascinating vocabulary of movement But a vocabulary in itself is no work of art, and we must still wait for him to fashion his first masterpiece out of it.

Mam'zelle Angot, a gruelling 108 performances old, is, let's face it, a silly old ballet and one of Massine's least inspired. One would have thought that the geriatricians of the Establishment might have been shrewder in trying to extend the life of an infinitely better Massine work, namely *Boutique Fantasque*. Nevertheless *Angot* is danced very well indeed, with special emphasis placed on good taste, even though this aspect of production may never have occurred to Massine himself.

The characters are manipulated as puppets, and yet in some cases, especially with the personalities of the company, Nerina, Grant, Lindsay and Hynd, the strings are often pulled both ways.

It is unfortunate that talent has to be spent so lavishly to stage a work that needs everything the company can give it. The unrewarding rôle of the Caricaturist, for example, presents technical difficulties and demands a first-class partner. Thus David Blair danced it, and very well, although a little reluctantly and without any great imagination regarding interpretation. Nerina, who was in better form than most of the other principals, gives the name rôle a perter, more spirited performance than anyone else, and does manage to suggest that she is a child of the gutter of the new Republic.

Although Rosemary Lindsay has become an enormously effective performer in certain rôles which require some maturity and is the best of the current Aristocrats, the centre scene in the Aristocrat's salon still sags abominably. Could the rôle be more effective if depicted on less genteel lines and given sharper social accents? Remember, the original aristocrat in the operetta on which Massine has based the ballet so closely was Madame Lange, an actress and *demi-mondaine* of the Directoire, and as the programme says, she is an old friend of Mam'zelle Angot.

Some individual performances managed to save the evening. However, there is a saying among dancers that if you miss one class you notice the effect on yourself. If you miss classes for a week, your teacher notices. But if you miss them for any longer than that, it is the audience who notices. Well, after the summer vacation, there were just too many dancers off form and it was the audience who suffered! But the choice of programme was the worst feature.

E. C. M.

Mingled repertory

AFTER the quaintly assorted first night programme, the opening of the Royal Ballet's second double-harness venture on August 18 did little to dispel the gloom. There is hardly anything more to say about Peter Wright's *A Blue Rose* — it would never find a place in my favourite herbaceous border, and I am only surprised to find it still cultivated at Covent Garden. However, Samuel Barber's sugar-frothily nostalgic music is pleasant, and the ballet was better done than on the company's provincial tour. Christopher Gable — well thought of by the grape-vine but hardly yet seen in London — made only a slight impression as the first *rosenkavalier*, but the other newcomer, Clover Roope (a sort of integrated guest artist from the resident Covent Garden company), proved charming in Patricia Cox's old part of the Two-Step girl.

Following the muted opening provided by this pastel-shaded ballet to end — one optimistically trusts — all pastel-shaded ballets, the high-coloured solidity (I nearly wrote stolidity) of Fokine's *The Firebird* appeared more than usually welcome. It was also a more than usually competent performance, too, with Nadia Nerina turning in a quite exceptional account of the Firebird. Her jumps cut through the air, as ever, while her arms found a new sinuous exoticism, and there was an underlying truth to her interpretation of this Oriental bird-woman of paradise. Somes, all uncouth aristocracy and unlicked dignity, was the consistently admirable Tsarevitch, while Franklin White — in his best rôle — proved fine as the malevolent Kostchei. I could have wished, however, for better dancing from the *ensemble*.

The evening ended in triumph with David Blair's return to *Pineapple Poll*, a performance worth a 24-gun salute. To my shame I had forgotten how good he was as Captain Belaye, but then perhaps, in my defence, he wasn't! Certainly he seems to have changed his portrayal, and I found this superbly swaggering masher far removed from the more diffident charmer he used to give us back in Rosebery Avenue. With a deliciously comic smugness, betraying itself with an occasional self-satisfied smirk, and his very shoulder-blades set in a knowing leer, he devastated his hearts with the air of a film-star signing autographs. His dancing had power, grace and authority, but was thrown off with a nonchalant air, almost as if he were saying: "As I remember it, Cranko's choreography used to go like *this*." And most splendidly like *this*, it went.

Audrey Farriss's Poll is a more convincing bumboat woman than most we have seen, but this is not altogether praise. There was a coarse, rumbustious raciness to her Poll, something like that once shown by Maryon Lane, but unlike Lane's it was not very endearing. It was well danced though, as was Johaar Mosaval's pot-boy Jasper.

Mosaval's urchin-pathos and pantherine dancing has now so successfully re-assembled this part to suit himself that the whole ballet has become subtly different. He is a fine artist with a completely individual movement style.

Susan Alexander's simpering deb of a Blanche — Belaye's fiancée — is in a class apart from anything else she has ever done. Funny and attractive, it could have coyly stepped out of one of the glossier pages of *Country Life*. Other good performances came from Margaret Knoesen as Mrs. Dimple and Gordon Aitken as the Bosun. The *corps de ballet* danced with zest, particularly Christopher Gable in the big jumps of the *finale*.

The next night, August 19, produced another Captain Belaye — almost as well-known as Blair's — Donald Britton's. Blair is suave and elegant, while Britton, more vulgar, is jauntily attractive. He looks as though he has come up from the ranks, and dances with a furious, assertive energy. If the part doesn't really suit him — and it doesn't — he chooses to disregard the fact, and does his surprisingly effective best. At this performance Stanley Holden returned to his old rôle of Jasper, making it once again into a perkily delightful Cockney character study.

But just how many different interpretations *Pineapple Poll* will sustain (the 3rd of my 17 patented tests for the quality of a narrative ballet) was shown on August 27 when Alexander Grant and Merle Park assumed the leading rôles. Grant had danced the part before during the Royal Ballet's New Zealand tour, and I remember at the time speculating dubiously on his chances. His technique, brilliant though it is, has a few unexpected chinks in its virtuosity, and so far as characterisation went I would have guessed it to be outside his range. Of course, I under-rated his intelligence. Without actually changing much of the choreography, he danced it his own way, letting Messrs. Blair, Britton & Co. lump it.

He went to work on the characterization of Belaye, and carved out a sort of Alec Guinness naval man that fitted him to a tee. Looking like a cross betwen Buster Keaton and Captain Bligh, he sailed through the ballet in an agony of frigid embarrassment. On the whole it was not such a good performance as Blair's, perhaps not as good as Britton's, but in moments like his shocked look of anguish when, in the last scene, his crew start to disrobe, both his rivals were adroitly scuppered.

Merle Park as Poll once again showed her aptitude for *soubrette* parts. Her dancing was a joy to watch, partly because of its unskimped perfection of detail, and even more because of its instinctively eloquent feeling for music. Unlike Grant's, this was a positively first appearance, and her acting went hardly further than a display of the right kind of high spirits. When this develops, as it should, she will be a formidable queen of the Portsmouth dockyards; as Mrs. Malaprop put it: "The very pineapple of success."

The season's first performance of *Ballet Imperial* on August 19 had Nerina and Blair shining stylishly with a soft dazzle, and a well-balanced *pas de trois* from Shirley Grahame, Gary Burne and Christopher Newton. Burne, here as elsewhere this season, was dancing most impressively with far more discipline than previously, and a good few less audience-subjugating glances. He is learning to use his head and shoulders without his former trace of affectation and in general he looks a much improved dancer. It was also excellent to have Jean Gilbert back to play the concerto; she has been sorely missed, not least by Tchaikovsky.

At the performance on August 25, Antoinette Sibley danced Balanchine's ballerina imperial for the first time, and fulfilled all happy expectations. Looking as cool as a Tallchief, she danced certain passages as if it was only by a careless oversight of history that they had not been created for her. It was a lovely first effort, although I was rather surprised at the smallness of her jump, and rather disturbed at her self-consciousness. In places she tended to gaze too affectionately at her feet, and in off-guarded moments displayed an overtly-preening charm that rang false. But despite these two fist-sized clouds that will presumably be blown away with experience, it was a dream of a début.

Possibly Pirmin Trecu felt the weight of Sibley's début more than she did herself. It certainly looked so, for apart from the second movement, which he always invests with poetic distinction, he was dancing with a little less than his usual spirit. Rosemary Lindsay danced attractively, replacing Grahame in the *pas de trois*.

C. B.

The rest of the season will be reviewed next month.

MARKOVA AS TAGLIONI in Dolin's version of The Pas de Quatre, *which was given at Festival Hall when London's Festival Ballet gave its Tenth Anniversary Gala.*
Photo : Mike Davis.

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET at the Royal Festival Hall

ANY selection, however tiny, of the great contemporary Giselles would surely include both Markova and Chauviré, and it was consequently quite an achievement for Festival Ballet to be able to show both of these standard portrayals in the same week. Rarely before have we had such an opportunity to comply with that time-honoured and traditional question of all the best examinations — "Compare and contrast . . ." The comparison and the contrast were both made even more rewarding by the addition of Carla Fracci — a debutante in the work — who was also offered up in the interests of comparative analysis, and I was able to see all three within the space of two days, August 21 and 22.

Markova, whom I caught at the Saturday matinée, has been dancing the rôle for a quarter of a century, and her interpretation is known and loved all over the world except unfortunately Russia. Of all the Giselles in my experience, hers has come the closest to the Romantic ideal. Her extraordinary sense of period style automatically suggests a Chalon lithograph, and there is a basic historic suitability about the whole portrayal which is hers alone.

Dancers are the unluckiest of artists. A young violinist learns his craft, perfects his technique, makes his début and can — if the gods are kind to him — continue to mature as an artist right up to the end of his life. Think of the world's great conductors, and consider their average age, think of any of the other executants, and then consider dancers and singers. In every respect their careers follow the same pattern, in every respect except one that is, for their instrument is the flesh and blood of their own

CARLA FRACCI AS GISELLE, which she danced for the first time, and with great success, during Festival Ballet's recent season. Photo : Mike Davis.

bodies, and there eventually comes a time to every dancer when his increase in artistry no longer entirely compensates for the gradual and inevitable decline of his technique. That point has, I feel, now been reached by Markova.

This is not to say that she is no longer a great Giselle, but whereas before I felt that her performances were, in a sense, getting better and better, I now think she is past her peak. She is still the fragile, Romantic myth, but her technical shortcomings, which could once be so gratefully overlooked, are now taking on rather more significance.

Physically Chauviré is also probably just starting the downward trend, but her career is still at that most rewarding stage where her ever-increasing artistry amply recompenses for any slight loss of technical prowess. She first came to the rôle of Giselle 10 years after Markova's début, and it is already 13 years since I first saw her dance it with Algaroff and Lifar in London. During that time she has constantly worked at her interpretation, all the time changing and developing its details. Yet the fundamental concept has remained intact.

Whereas Markova, to me at any rate, has aimed at becoming the embodiment of Romantic ballet, and Ulanova (that third great Giselle) has boldly set about the task of realising Giselle on more straightforwardly dramatic lines, Chauviré appears to have elected to steer the middle course, stressing the universality of the character. Yet while trying to convey the emotions and perhaps even the situations in contemporary terms she also goes to great pains to place her characterisation within the framework of the Romantic style.

The last time I saw her dance Giselle — at Covent Garden in 1958 — she seemed to be veering towards the realistic approach; but now at the Festival Hall she has made quite a few amendments to that reading, all of which — notably those to her Mad Scene — have the effect of stylising the portrayal so that it is more in conformity with the Romantic convention. This, for my money, was the best of all the Giselles she has so far given us. Her touching warmth, simplicity and tenderness in the first act is matched by her almost human spirit in the second. Moreover, her dancing is now most remarkably stylish, drained pure of all affectation, and showing that marvellous artlessness that is the final distillation of art.

Carla Fracci danced *her* first Giselle in London on the evening of August 22, and immediately scored a resounding success. Giselle is the only ballerina rôle I know where immaturity is as useful to a dancer as maturity itself, and as a consequence it is the part in which the young aspirant ballerina is quite likely to have her greatest success. But in Fracci's performance there was a great deal more than the instinctive feeling that almost any young dancer of talent has for the ballet; it looked for all the world like the début of a girl destined to make her mark on the rôle.

The spontaneous innocence she expressed in the first act was immediately touching, and her Mad Scene had all the gentle bewilderment of an adolescent's first knowledge of pain and betrayal. Her dancing in this act was good, but it was in the second act that her inherent grandeur of movement made itself most strongly felt. As a classical stylist she is several degrees off impeccable. She tends to be turned-in and her feet are not the kind that win gold medals, yet the carriage of her head has incipient nobility, and her arm movements hold out the promise of future greatness. She swirled through Myrtha's glade as if propelled by the wind, and made one exit with such a gesture of wind-blown ecstasy that one got a sudden comprehending glimpse of what this Giselle could become in ten or fifteen years time. Lucky Italy!

The three Giselles had two Albrechts — Vladimir Skouratoff partnering Markova, while Gilpin was matched with both Chauviré and Fracci. The magnificent Skouratoff with his brooding virility and darkly handsome stage presence can never fail to make a good impression, and he is a gallant, considerate cavalier. Yet for all this there is something about him, a very slight casualness of manner, a certain natural colloquialism in gesture, that makes him better suited to suggest modern heroes than cardboard princes. His Albrecht proved conscientious and sincere, his acting was forcefully direct, while his dancing had a forthright power that enhanced Markova's elusive softness, yet the period style was lacking.

Gilpin's Albrecht is now probably one of the most intelligent portrayals I have ever seen. The characterisation is carried out with an immense amount of detail. As for example when Giselle enters wearing Bathilde's necklace Gilpin immediately recognises it, and throughout he has been at pains to make his characterisation logical and coherent. Even more impressive than this logic is the considerable subtlety he now brings to his acting. I noticed that after Giselle's death he at first seemed numbed with fury, he picks up her hand, presses it to his lips, releases it, and as it falls lifeless a sudden agonised look of comprehension passes over his face, as though he had not at first completely realised that she was dead. But for all this subtlety — and for all his faultless dancing — it remains a curiously disengaged performance, as though he has still not really identified himself with the part. I must add the rider, however, that in the Fracci performance he came to within a hair's-breadth of success, and this notable Albrecht could still very easily become a great one.

There were also two Hilarions, both giving very different interpretations that showed an unusual elasticity in the production. Vassilie Trunoff had obviously been influenced by the Bolshoi Hilarions, and gave a carefully considered performance. I liked his first sympathetic entrance at the beginning of the ballet, and I also approve of his dance of death in the second act, which foreshadowed the fate in store for Albrecht. If Trunoff had been influenced by the Bolshoi, I cannot imagine what had influenced Keith Beckett, but I wish it would stop.

Marilyn Burr jumped most beautifully as Myrtha, but it was left to Janet Overton to express more of the Queen's ice-cold malignity.

Finally, what has happened to Anton Dolin's production? Once among the finest we have seen, it has now been allowed to sag into mediocrity, while the Hugh Stevenson décor and costumes are looking positively shabby, and are not helped by the illuminations.

At the matinée performance the leading girls in *Symphony for Fun* were taken over by Diane Westerman and Pamela Hart.

Westerman had the cute twinkle the ballet needs, but Hart made very little impression on the work. **C. B.**

Burr's Swanilda

TOWARDS the end of its season, and not a moment too soon, Festival Ballet showed a marked improvement, both in many individual performances and in general teamwork. While this augurs very well for the future, it came a little too late to entirely obliterate the bad impression made by some of the opening programmes.

Harald Lander's reproduction of the Danish *Coppélia* was given a very spirited and fresh performance. Unfortunately, the version peters out and nothing the dancers can do brings much excitement to the final act, which is so short that no sooner has one sat down than one gets up again.

Marilyn Burr, who has been dancing rather unevenly this season, but never badly enough to lose favour, dominated the production as Swanilda should. She managed to surpass herself with her dancing, which was most exciting — lovely high extensions, many of which were held in sustained balances, and some really spectacular *jetés*. Her interpretation proved ideal for a large theatre: insouciant, and broad rather than subtle. It is directed almost exclusively towards comedy, especially in the scenes with Coppélius, rather than towards developing the romance theme with Frantz (Louis Godfrey) which she only outlines.

I rather had the impression that Marilyn Burr was too hard-boiled and sophisticated a dancer to make an ideal Swanilda. And although it seemed at odd moments that her characterisation was a very clever act, and not deeply felt, it is much to her credit that she displayed so much engaging charm and humour.

Act 1 was danced with drive and precision, with the exception of the *Czardas*. But even this has looked better as its *Victoria and Her Hussar* costumes had faded in the wash. In it Mary Duchesne seemed to be the only dancer who did not look perplexed at having to shuffle briskly towards the audience in a "shimmy" movement, with her arms folded horizontally under her chin. Anita Landa as Swanilda's first friend was vivacious and animated throughout, and thus managed to sustain interest in some of the duller passages.

E. C. M.

The rest of the season will be reviewed next month.

TELEVISION

Two Brothers

The Ballet Rambert on BBC Television on August 16. Choreography, Norman Morrice. Décor and costumes by Ralph Koltai. Adapted and produced by Christian Simpson.

GILLIAN MARTLEW
NORMAN MORRICE
JOHN CHESWORTH
and *corps de ballet*

AS Christian Simpson must have divined, Norman Morrice provides the type of choreography of which television is most in need. This proved to be an expert production and, although by no means perfect, one of the best the BBC has transmitted.

A welcome attempt was made to link the camera movement to the action, and thereby enhance the choreography with the special effects which only TV can provide. The cameras bravely tracked right in among the dancers. This resulted in some effective angle shots and revealing close-ups of expressive hands and faces, which often made the work more interesting than it is from a fixed viewpoint in a theatre.

The first shot, showing the younger brother propping up his bicycle, set the mood of realism. The opening passages were timid in treatment and rather shaky, giving an impression that we were in for the usual muddle. Then strong production asserted itself, leaving the remaining two-thirds of the work not far from flawless. The cutting was confident, and shots from floor-level or overhead were used to good effect. The duel between the two boys was broken up intelligently, so that it did not appear the very danced fight which it actually is.

Gillian Martlew came over well through all the varying degrees of close-up, making her performance as the distracted girl the most moving TV dance portrayal since Paula Hinton appeared in *The Night and Silence* last year. There is something incredibly real about her interpretation, which through its very intensity must surely be recreated emotionally at every performance. The final close-up with tears of anguish starting in her eyes must have touched the exposed nerves and hearts of many viewers.

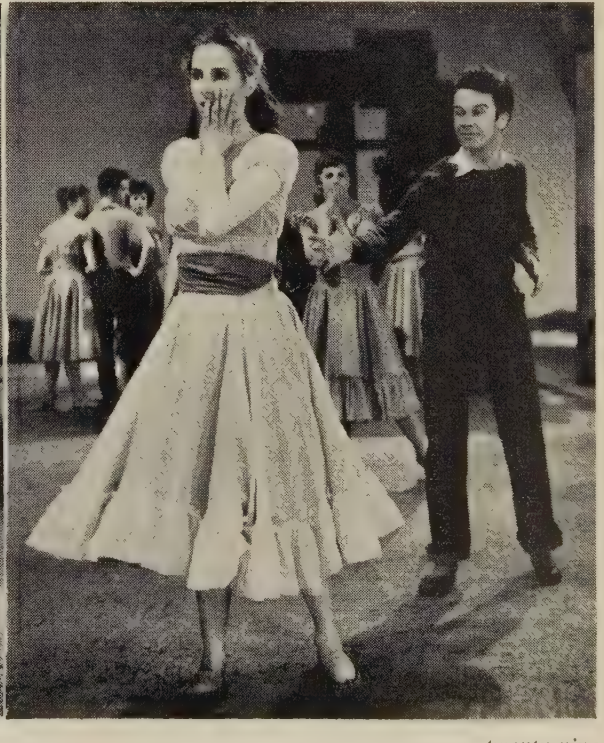
Norman Morrice likewise gave a sensitive performance. In conflict with himself and at war with the back-street society which he has thrust himself into, this generally irritating and unsympathetic character is as resolutely contemporary as any of the protagonists of Messrs. Osborne, Amis or Braine. Close-ups served him well, too, as he expressed humiliation and his erratic, violent and impulsive behaviour.

From the point of view of characterisation, the elder brother stands out less vividly. Nevertheless, John Chesworth managed to give him a down to earth, matter-of-fact existence. The *corps de ballet* virtually serves as a chorus, and echoes or leads the shifting moods of the ballet much as Bergman in his films has used shots of nature — angry or in repose — to reflect or anticipate the moods of his characters.

With the exception of Thelma Litster as the girl's friend who has a few opportunities to step into the foreground, none of the dancers emerge from the *corps*, and none jumped out of context to the detriment of the production.

It all looked very well rehearsed. I only wish that just a little more time could have been spent on preliminaries. There were a few moments when the cameras were just slightly in the wrong place or didn't show quite enough of the action. **E. C. M.**

TWO BROTHERS *ON TV : Left, John Chesworth, as the elder brother, with Gillian Martlew just after they announce their engagement. Right, the younger brother, Norman Morrice, has just kissed Gillian Martlew, his brother's fiancée. Two scenes from Norman Morrice's ballet from Ballet Rambert which recently had such a success in America.* *Photos : BBC.*



FRANCE

The Paris Opéra

M. JULIEN, the new Administrator, has declared that "from now onwards this illustrious house is no longer to be ruled by political or emotional considerations". The first results of these fortunate resolutions have enabled various dancers to display their talents in new rôles. Consequently, on the eve of the annual closure, we have been able to compare two new Giselles.

The first, Christiane Vaussard, under the skilful guidance of Léon Anlen, has shown a marked improvement and has surpassed herself. Although her interpretation is interesting from an artistic point of view, it lacks conviction. It was quickly overshadowed by that of Josette Amiel, who had been produced by Lifar. Amiel managed to combine technical precision with a delicate sense of style. In her portrayal she insisted on emphasising the coquettish character of the young girl, which is a perfectly justifiable conception. Her "Mad Scene" is still a little cold and shallow and she doesn't feel enough yet, but in Act 2 she displayed an intelligent sense of the Romantic period. While she is not equal in lyricism to her more illustrious predecessors, she still stands up to comparison with a great number of them.

Claire Motte made a perfect Queen of the Wilis, combining authority and pride with a perfect technique. Peter Van Dijk, who too rarely appears as Albrecht, brought nobility and a very personal style to his portrait of the Prince.

Succeeding Toumanova and Vyroubova, Claude Bessy danced the name rôle in *Phèdre,* which she has performed in Moscow, in Paris for the first time. In spite of the mastery with which she dances, the rôle does not suit her. It demands a rare sense of tragedy and quite exceptional authority. In *Noces fantastiques,* in which she triumphs, the character of the seductive Nereid is much more suited to her personality. Jacqueline Rayet was a very young and serious Aricie, and Alexandre Kalioujny a majestic Theseus.

After a performance of Swanilda in *Coppélia,* to which she brought a rebellious grace, Liane Daydé evoked the Degas dancer of *Entre deux rondes.* With her was Attilio Labis, who danced the part of Apollo for the first time. With faultless suppleness he combines a very virile spontaneity, and thus can be favourably compared with Michel Renault, who has, incidentally, been suspended from the company for three months.

Under the strong direction of Gérard Mulys, *La Symphonie Fantastique* has been revived with Vaussard, Youly Algaroff, Kalioujny, Rayet and Labis. Their rendering would seem to be more disciplined than the earlier production.

Ballets : U.S.A.

THE Théâtre des Nations brought its third season to a triumphant close with this youthful American company, who performed from July 15-19. The world of theatre and dance were so attracted by Robbins' reputation — he had already been declared undisputed winner of the choreographic prize by the young critics — that many postponed their holidays in order to attend the opening night. Four works, three of them completely new, made up the programme.

In *Moves,* a ballet without music, the complex play of steps and patterns is sketched out with perfect mastery and faultless precision. Its mechanism cannot be criticised, but interesting though the work is, it has the character of a laboratory experiment, and, in French eyes, lacks composition and a sense of direction. It is not equal to Lichine's *La Création,* which is very similar but of a more classic nature.

New York Export : Opus Jazz succeeded by its typically American flavour and inimitable dynamics. On a strictly choreographic plane, the *pas de deux* between Wilma Curley and John Jones appeared particularly rich, while the ending, constructed on a musical pattern of theme, variations and fugue, was danced with complete mastery.

L'Aprés-midi d'un faune has been danced in Paris by the New York City Ballet by Tanaquil LeClercq and Jacques d'Amboise in a more interesting production than the present one. However, the qualities of this original work are retained, notably its musical sense. This latter was lacking in Nijinsky's version, though he, in his turn, was more faithful to the character of Mallarmé's poem.

The last item, *The Concert,* was a triumph of humour and comic invention. Steinberg's décor catches the burlesque atmosphere sought by Robbins, who is also remarkably well served by the dancers' verve. It included some very witty parodies of Fokine, Balanchine and Massine.

The Indian National Theatre

THE Indian National Theatre, a charming company formed under difficult circumstances in 1944 in response to popular demand, made its Paris début on July 1 at the Théâtre des Nations. It is therefore easy to understand that, with its limited experience, it does not aspire to the finesse of the bharata-natya or manipuri. Thus folklore predominates over the classical schools, which are too complex to be rapidly assimilated. *Krishna-Leela,* however, takes up traditional theme and describes the life of the Blue God, but in very hybrid choreography: an authentic kathakali dancer provides the outstanding element in an otherwise languishing performance. *Dekh teri Bambai* depicts with realistic simplicity 24 hours of life in Bombay.

Let us hope that India does not break with her glorious past, thereby bartering the pure gold of her traditions against the dross of so-called modern gimmicks. The exchange would be sadly to her discredit.

News In Brief

AT this year's gala at the Casino d'Enghien held on June 18, the greatest triumph was won by Yvette Chauviré. Well-partnered by Gert Reinholm, her notable performances were in the *pas de deux* from *Orphée* and in *Joan de Zarissa,* both works by Tatiana Gzovsky. A few days later, Gilberte Cournand had the happy idea of honouring the great ballerina with the presentation of a statuette which had been designed by Yencesse, the sculptor.

MILORAD MISKOVITCH'S contribution to Enghien was in the rôle of Don Juan in Jack Carter's *Senor de Manara*: music Tchaikovsky, décors and costumes by Bernard Daydé. For his forthcoming tour of America he will appear with the Belgrade dancer, Dusanka Sifnios.

DURING the Deauville season of the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas in August, rehearsals began for a new ballet by Lifar based on de Musset's *On ne badine pas avec l'amour.* The principal dancers are Nina Vyroubova, Genia Melikova and George Goviloff.

THE Louvre has arranged an exhibition titled *The Dance in the French Theatre in the 17th and 18th Centuries.* It will include works by Callot, Bérain, Watteau, Gillot, Servandoni and Boucher.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

AMERICA

MORE than 30 years ago, Serge Diaghilev is reputed to have said, "There are only three kinds of wonderful dancers in this world — the Russians, the Spaniards and the Negroes". Although this impresario was not far-sighted enough then to know that other dancing would come into flower too (in Britain, the Royal Ballet and the pioneering Ballet Rambert, and in America, for instance, such disparate and dynamic companies as those organised by Martha Graham and Jerome Robbins), he was, of course, so right, and this past summer's rash of dance in New York City more than proved Diaghilev's statement true. The return engagement of S. Hurok's Russian Festival of Music and Dance for five additional performances at Madison Square Gardens again proved conclusively that these dancers are indeed like rockets in orbit. As for the Spaniards, Antonio Medina and Eugenio Goya were fresh and exciting examples of the fire and dynamics of dance from Spain in their first New York appearances in the "World Dance Festival" presented by Jean Dalrymple in the Hudson Celebration at the new, outdoor Theatre-in-the-Park in Central Park, as was the Ballet Espanol Ximenez-Vargas at Jacob's Pillow and Roberto Iglesias and his Spanish Ballet at the Winter Garden. Young American Negro dancer, Alvin Ailey, and his company scored again in *Blues Suite,* and Mr. Ailey further demonstrated his choreographic talents with his contributions to a revival of *Carmen Jones,* both at the Theatre-in-the-Park.

Russian Festival of Music and Dance

THE return of the Russian Festival of Music and Dance, presented by Sol Hurok at Madison Square Gardens provided such a brilliantly staged cross-section of Russian dance styles that nearly everything else we will be seeing for a while is going to seem rather anaemic and colourless. After a second viewing, one is perhaps most impressed by two things: one, the outstanding quality of all the male dancers, particularly those who are members of the Piatnitsky Russian Folk Choir; two, the fact that the varied folk dance groups outshone the ballet interludes in the programme. Unfortunately, individual soloists were not programmed and so it is quite impossible to give adequate praise and credit to many of these magnificent dancers.

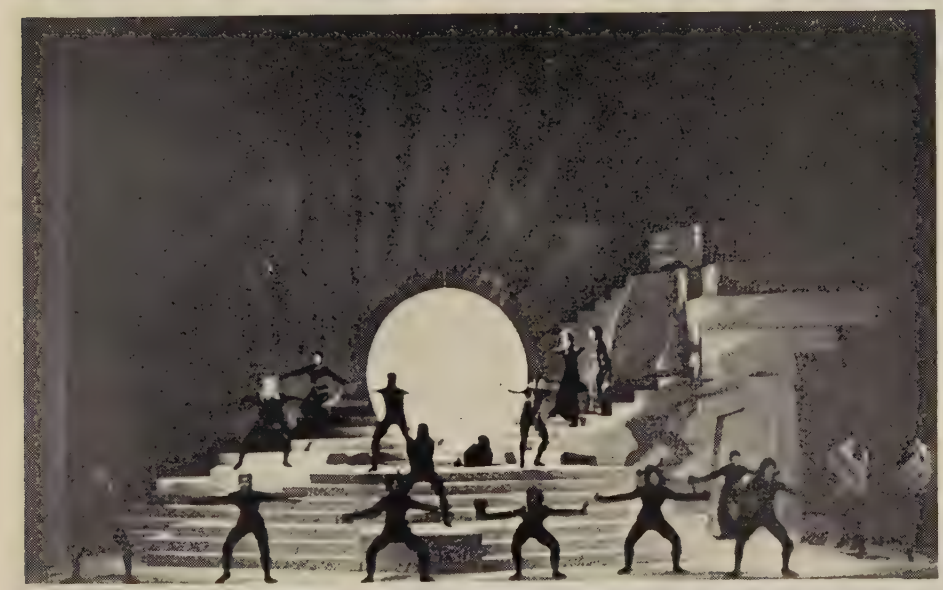
Dance in the Round

THE Hudson Celebration (commemorating the 350th anniversary of the discovery of the Hudson River) Theatre-in-the-Park, under the direction of Jean Dalrymple, offered a diversity of dance in Central Park during the 90 degree evenings

CHAUVIRE AT ENGHIEN : During the recent festival at Enghien, near Paris, Yvette Chauviré appeared with her partner, Gert Reinholm. They are seen in two works created for them by Tatiana Gzovsky. On the left in Orphée ; *on the right in* Joan de Zarissa. *Photos : Lido.*

in sweltering New York during the summer that were a boon to city-bound dance enthusiasts. Set in a grove of trees, with the stars overhead, a glorious background of skyscrapers and beyond that rim the park, this outdoor theatre with its circular stage is so beautifully situated that it almost overpowers what transpires on the stage itself. In the first place, an arena-type theatre does not really adapt itself to ballet performances that were originally planned for a traditional stage. Focus is non-existent, so to speak, in the round and the dancers inevitably have their backs to some part of the audience constantly. Nevertheless, and despite these limitations, the rarely seen-in-New York Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo overcame, for the most part, these technical problems and made a better showing generally than they did in their season at the Met. a few seasons back. The chief credit for this is due to Nina Novak, the company's first dancer and ballet mistress, who rearranged the ballets to suit this stage. Interestingly enough, ballets such as *Swan Lake, Les Sylphides* and the *pas de deux* came across much more effectively than did *Gaîté Parisienne* and *Sombreros.* Granted, the traditional settings were greatly missed. On the other hand, however, it was a stun-

NEW CARTER WORK AT ENGHIEN : Left, Yvonne Meyer, as the Love in Rags, with Milorad Miskovitch, as Don Juan, in Jack Carter's ballet, to Tchaikovsky music, called Senor de Manara. *Right, Miskovitch with Ariel Auclerc, as the Pure Love, in the last scene of this ballet created for the Enghien Festival. Photos : Lido.*



ning experience to have a ring-side view, as it were, of Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch in the Grand *Pas de Deux* from *Don Quixote* and the *Black Swan pas de deux.* And both danced more magnificently than they have hereabouts in the past few seasons. Alicia Alonso is again at the peak of her powers and Igor Youskevitch proved once more that he remains one of the great male classical dancers in the world — virile, handsome and a superb partner.

The so-called "World Dance Festival" (actually, it was only a small world of dance) at this Theatre-in-the-Park featured Jean Leon Destine and his Haitian Dance Company, the Dancers from Ceylon, Antonio Medina and Eugenio Goya, Alvin Ailey and his company and Fred Berk's charming group of Hebraica Dancers. Since this programme was co-ordinated and directed by Susan Pimsleur, who is also an agent for dancers under the name of Musical Artists, one had the inevitable feeling that she quite obviously selected the dancers she represented rather than plan a balanced programme. Alvin Ailey, as noted previously, came across magnificently (he could dance anywhere, apparently, and still be wonderful), though his delightful *Blues Suite* lacked focus and perspective under these open-air conditions. The Hebraica Dancers, performing in a purely folk idiom, seemed to belong in this natural setting as did the Dancers of Ceylon with their colourful costumes and drummers and Antonio Medina and Eugenio Goya in their gypsy dances.

Hanya Holm at Vancouver

FROM all reports, Hanya Holm's overall staging and choreography for *Orpheus and Euridice* at the Vancouver International Festival may well change the course of opera production in this country. Hanya Holm's brilliant choreography for *Kiss Me, Kate* and *My Fair Lady* is already familiar to British theatre-goers. Now, it seems, this dynamic figure has directed a "total" opera. Howard Taubman of the *New York Times*, who hailed this as "a stirring artistic entity," added "Miss Holm's secret was that she avoided literalism. . . . Everywhere the movement grew out of the theme of the work. The transitions from dance to song were so smooth that they were almost unnoticeable."

In a programme note on her dance approach to *Orpheus,* Hanya Holm stated: "Here the dance intensifies the legend. Whether in contrast to it or in harmony with it, it is inseparable from the principal thought of the opera. The dance has not been used for decorative entertainment, but as an extension of the opera's true action.... I have sought to selectively cast away the non-essential elements in order to reveal the core of the thought engendering this opera."

This production was designed and lighted by Donal Oenslager and it was conducted by Oivin Fjeldstad. Solo dancers were Maryann de Lichtenberg and Henry Kersh, the latter a member of the Los Angeles City Ballet. Patricia Drylie, of the New York cast of *My Fair Lady,* was assistant to Miss Holm. The ballet *corps* of twenty-six was recruited largely from local young dancers.

HANYA HOLM PRODUCES ORPHEUS: *The three pictures on the left show how Hanya Holm produced Glück's* Orpheus *for the 1959 Vancouver Festival. Top, the staging of Act 1, scene 1. Middle, Act 2, scene 1, the scene in the underworld. Below, Act 2, scene 2, in the Elysian Fields.*

Photos: Marshall Brooks.

Other Canadian News

THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA, under the direction of Celia Franca, formerly a member of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, has opened a residential and day school in Toronto that is believed to be the first permanent school of its kind in North America. The principal is Betty Oliphant, ballet mistress of the company, and the faculty includes Juliette Fischer, Lucille McClure and Nancy Schwenker as well as Miss Franca and Shirley Nash, assistant ballet mistress of the company, who will also be teaching when available. In addition to professional training, the academic school will offer a programme of general education up to and including Senior Matriculation. Registration commences at the age of ten for residential and day students while the ballet division is accepting students from seven upwards.

Montreal's Les Grands Ballet Canadiens closed the 27th season of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in a programme of five ballets designed by Canadian artists. Under the aegis of Mme. Ludmilla Chiriaeff, this five-year-old company numbers some twenty dancers, chief among them being Eric Hyrst, formerly of the Metropolitan Ballet and Sadler's Wells (now Royal) Ballet ; Margaret Mercier, also an alumna of The Royal Ballet, and Eva Von Gencsy, formerly with the Salzburg Opera and The Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Four of the works — *Labyrinthe, Sea Gallows, Premiere Classique* and *Trianon* were by Eric Hyrst — and the fifth, *Farces* (Commedia dell Arte), was by Ludmilla Chiriaeff.

Takarazuka Dance Theatre

THE all-girl Takarazuka Dance Theatre from Japan commenced a two and a half week engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House on September 16th in a series of two programmes featuring traditional dances of the East as well as more Westernised styles of dance with lavish costumes, spectacular scenery and a Western-style orchestra. More news and a report on these dancers will appear in our next issue.

S. Hurok Presents

WHAT sounds like a continuous festival of dance in New York is the series of dance events to be presented by impresario Sol Hurok in New York this autumn. This started with the one-week engagement of Roberto Iglesias and his Spanish Ballet at the Winter Garden Theatre on September 21. October 13 sees the première of the Bayanihann Dance Company from the Philippines. Starting November 3 Hurok will present the Polish State Folk Ballet, known as *Slask* and, following this, The Inbal dancers from Israel.

RETURN VISIT : So successful was the Russian Festival of Music and Dance in New York that some of the groups returned for further performances. Amongst the most successful was the Piatnitsky Folk Choir, who are seen in a dance in the picture above.

The New York City Ballet

THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET'S four-week season, which concluded September 20, had as its chief novelty a revival of *Jeux d'Enfants,* to Bizet's music, choreographed by Francisco Moncion and George Balanchine and with scenery and costumes by Esteban Frances. Due to the illness of her father, prima ballerina Maria Tallchief did not make her expected return to the company in New York. Furthermore, Royes Fernandez, who missed the Spring season because of a knee injury, was out of this current season due to a foot injury. A review of the repertoire and the one revival will appear in our next issue.

Ford Fund for Dancers

THE FORD FOUNDATION has appropriated $525,000 to assist ballet dancers, creative writers and directors in the professional theatre. Interesting to the dance world, of course, is the fact that the ballet programme will enable students to be observed at their schools for a three-year period by representatives of the School of American Ballet in New York and the School of the San Francisco Ballet. After training in West or East Coast Centers, it is possible that some candidates will be chosen for public performances with either the New York City or the San Francisco Ballet.

Arthur Todd.

Finnish National Ballet in Edinburgh

continued from page 19

remarkably faithful reproduction, yet another of my senior colleagues disagreed violently and thought it was a perversion of the Fokine original. For myself let me be content with saying that in a number of key places it closely resembled photographs of the original production; that this Finnish version differed in a few points of detail from the synopsis given by Cyril Beaumont in the *Complete Book of Ballets*; and finally, if I had to make a guess I would be inclined to say that this was probably as much like Fokine's 1936 ballet as most versions of *Prince Igor,* say, are like the first Diaghilev production.

What obviously is now missing is the décor and costumes by André Derain, and the scenery by Janos Horvath and costumes by Martha Platonoff are very, very poor substitutes. The ballet itself is a delicate piece of *chinoiserie* about a poor coolie who wants to marry the daughter of a mandarin. The mandarin, anxious for a more advantageous match, seeks to marry the girl off to a rich Ambassador from France. The coolie disguises himself as a dragon and scares off his rival, who runs off leaving his wealth behind him. This the coolie appropriates, so leaving no barrier between himself and the girl he loves.

The choreography is clever and appropriate. The courtly dances of the French suitor and his two bewigged *aides-de-camps* are a pure delight, and contrast brilliantly with the mildly Orientalised flavour of the rest of the choreography. Many of the group dances have an authentic Fokine look about them, and the final procession is a marvellous piece of fluent, pure dance invention, deceptively simple and utterly beguiling. I was far less happy about the use of Mozart music, which struck me as insensitive and very old-fashioned. It also brought home to me how much Balanchine has conditioned our present ideas on how 18th century music should be used for ballet.

The ballet was adequately danced, particularly by Oiva Ollikkala as the French Ambassador, and Heikki Värtsi as the young Coolie, although the latter, a character dancer, was probably not sinuous enough in his movements. Maj-lis Rajala made only a small impression as the heroine, Chung Yung, while that made by Seija Silferberg as the Butterfly was, if anything, smaller. Even I was tempted to go around saying: "Ah, but you should have seen Kirsova!"

If you were directing a Finnish National Ballet, and there was in existence a ballet score by your great national composer Sibelius, you would almost undoubtedly do what the Finns have done, and produce it. You would be wrong. Sibelius wrote the score for *Scaramouche* in 1912 to accompany a "dance-pantomime" by the Danish writer Poul Knudsen. In 1922 this was made into a ballet with choreography by Emilie Walbom and given by the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen. Later still Rosella Hightower used both theme and music for her *Scaramouche,* which was given by the De Cuevas Company. I remember seeing this latter version at the Edinburgh Festival of 1952 — it was terrible. As a ballet *Scaramouche* presents two insuperable difficulties; the first is the music, the second is the story. *continued on page 34.*

The Sibelius music opens turgidly and is slow-paced throughout. The story of a pure young wife's fatal attraction to a demon fiddler is nothing but unconvincing melodrama, prolonged for what seemed like hours by a score that is never going to get going but lacks the courage to face that fact. The choreography of the present Finnish version is by Irja Koskinen, and seemed blandly unremarkable. The décor by Paul Souminen was in blotchy patches of red and blue, and the old-fashioned costumes added to its air of being a pre-war revue number.

Nevertheless the ballet was given with tremendous integrity and sincerity by Lisa Taxell as the erring wife and Klaus Salin as the Paganini-like gypsy. Like nearly everything the company did it made a strong impression on the audience.

I was looking forward to seeing something of the Minkus *Don Quichotte*, but this condensation by George Gé turned out to be a rare old muddle that disappointed on nearly every count. Tawdry looking sets and costumes and shabby dance routines added up to a dispiriting spectacle. Doris Lainë, the company's prima ballerina, did her best to redeem the situation with a really splendid display of dance pyrotechnics. Salin partnered well, and Värtsi made a real hit as the bouncy Sancho Panza. It was also possible here and there to catch a glimpse of what is possibly, in its full-length Russian version, an extremely diverting ballet.

Second Programme

THE programme given at the two matinées opened with a ballet choreographed by Elsa Sylverstersson, called *Circle of Roses*. The music by Ahti Sonninen is based on Finnish folk dances and folk songs, and the whole ballet finds a place in the folksy genre. The story, based on a poem by the Finnish national poet Aleksis Kivi, tells of a misunderstanding between two lovers, when the girl fails to wear her scarf as a love token. The cast was pleasantly led by Lisa Taxell and Uno Onkinen, but the ballet is of no very compelling interest.

There followed a *divertissement* consisting of a conventional version of *Valse Triste*; a *Dance of the Spider* which was perfectly horrifying in quite the wrong way; a comedy *pas de trois* by Gé called *Three Harlequins*; and the *Black Swan Pas de Deux* danced by Lainë and Salin. Lainë made a good shot at Odile, but Salin's strength as a partner did not fully compensate for his deficiencies as a dancer. This programme ended with a repeat of *Don Quichotte*, in which the principal rôles were handed over to Rajala and Onkinen, neither of whom seemed to find this kind of thing down their street.

Third Programme

THE last programme to be presented by the Finns consisted simply of *Giselle*, which had been produced for the company by Leonid Lavrovsky in the manner of his by now famous Bolshoi version. This too achieved less than it appeared to promise. Lavrovsky's marvellously detailed reconstruction demands artists of complete artistic maturity if it is to succeed, that much became evident from this performance. For these Finns, for all their charming sincerity, lacked artists of sufficient weight. The young boy, for example, who played Hilarion, certainly went through the same motions as did Lapauri and Levashev for the Bolshoi, but with ludicrously different results. Nor was the production much helped by a décor and costumes which although based on the Bolshoi looked like a most inferior copy.

Doris Lainë gave a well thought-out and touching account of Giselle, even though her dancing, particularly in the second act, was rather too hard for romanticism. Salin, a very attractive stage personality, looked well as Albrecht and also acted with a welcome maturity. But once again his actual dancing proved more of a liability than an asset. Margaretha von Bahr was the suitably imperious Myrtha, and some of the best dancing of the season came from a little Leningrad trained boy, Leo Ahonen, dancing the Peasant *Pas de Deux* in the first act.

The company was very popular indeed with the Edinburgh audiences. It would be easy to put this down to the fairly conventional nature of their repertory, yet I am certain that to do so would be to tell less than half of the truth. For the company had a most engaging quality of vitality and enjoyment which made an immediate contact with its audience. There is also no doubt that the Finns have a natural aptitude for dancing, an instinctive feeling for the music, and an uninhibited power of projection. What was distressing was the apparently bad training — the poor *pliés*, the turned-in legs and the slap-dash positioning — which seemed to be only too much in evidence. But if, as I have already suggested, this was a provincial company, it must be added in all fairness that it looked like a *Russian* provincial company, and there was nothing much wrong with it that a few good teachers and choreographers would not put right in a comparatively short time. All the same at present I cannot feel that the Finns are yet ready to display their wares on the international market. **Clive Barnes.**

COVER STORIES

This month's cover, by Houston Rogers, is of Georgina Parkinson and Donald MacLeary of the Royal Ballet in Andrée Howard's La Belle Dame sans Merci.

PARKINSON was born in Brighton in 1938 and she first studied at the Audrey Kemp School in that city, nine years later. At the age of 12 she auditioned for the Royal Ballet School, which she entered in 1951. Starting off in the *corps de ballet* in the Royal Ballet, which she joined three years later, she gradually began to be noticed and was soon taking on solo rôles. When Lynn Seymour had to give up her rôle in Howard's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* owing to a foot injury, Parkinson took over at very short notice and became the only girl in the Royal Ballet to create a leading rôle during the company's recent joint season.

MACLEARY was born in Glasgow in 1937. In 1951 he became a pupil of Sheila Ross. In the following year he joined the Royal Ballet School and was soon appearing in ballets and with the opera at Covent Garden. In 1954 he joined what was then the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and was soon taking over important rôles. The following year he created a solo rôle in MacMillan's *Danses Concertantes*, and the principal male rôle in Rodrigues' *Saudades*. He later rose to become one of the company's principal male dancers. Recently he has joined the resident Covent Garden company, partnering Svetlana Beriosova.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET

September
14 The Hippodrome, Golders Green (2 weeks)
28 The Streatham Hill Theatre, Streatham Hill (2 weeks)

at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

October
19 *Les Patineurs, Antigone* (world première), *Pineapple Poll*
20 *Les Patineurs, Antigone, Pineapple Poll*
21 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
22 *Coppélia* (Park, Burne), *Façade*
23 *Les Patineurs, Antigone, Pineapple Poll*
24 **(E)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair)
26 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
27 *Ballet Imperial, Antigone, Façade*
29 *Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes)
30 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, MacLeary)

November
3 *Sylvia* (Nerina, Blair)
4 *Ballet Imperial, Antigone, Façade*
7 **(M)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, MacLeary)
7 **(E)** *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
11 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
14 *Sylvia* (Linden, Blair)
19 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
21 **(M)** *Coppélia* (Nerina, Blair)
21 **(M)** *Coppélia* (Nerina, Blair), *Façade*
21 **(E)** *Pineapple Poll, Symphonic Variations, Daphnis and Chloë*
24 *Pineapple Poll, Symphonic Variations, Daphnis and Chloë*
27 *Pineapple Poll, Symphonic Variations, Daphnis and Chloë*
28 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, MacLeary)
30 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)

December
1 *Les Patineurs, Rinaldo and Armida, The Firebird*
3 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
5 *Sylvia* (Beriosova, MacLeary)
9 *Antigone, Symphonic Variations, Daphnis and Chloë*
12 **(M)** *Coppélia* (Sibley, Usher), *Façade*
12 **(E)** *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)

THE ROYAL BALLET (TOURING CO.)

September
14 The Grand Theatre, Leeds
21 The Theatre Royal, Newcastle
28 The Lyceum, Sheffield

October
5 The Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool
12 King's Theatre, Glasgow
19 His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen
26 King's Theatre, Edinburgh

November
2 The Globe Theatre, Stockton-on-Tees
9 The Opera House, Manchester
16 Theatre Royal, Nottingham
21 The New Theatre, Oxford
30 The Hippodrome, Bristol

December
7 The Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon

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October
21 Salkoner Centret Theatre, Copenhagen. Followed by a tour of Scandinavia, Germany and Italy.

December
26 The Royal Festival Hall, London (2 weeks)

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September
21 Theatre Royal, Nottingham
28 Essoldo Theatre, Brighton

October
19 Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
26 New Theatre, Hull

November
2 Arts Theatre, Cambridge
9 Theatre Royal, Hanley
16 Granada Theatre, Shrewsbury
23 Lyceum Theatre, Newport

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INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVALS

The following have already announced that there will be ballet in their festivals. Details to be published when available.

BERLIN: Sept. 20-Oct. 6. Ballet of the Berlin State Opera in *Undine* and *Schwarze Sonne*, Jerome Robbins' Ballets U.S.A.

DUBLIN: Sept. 14-27. London's Festival Ballet (world première of *Full Moon for the Bride*); Lotte Goslar's Mime-Dance Company

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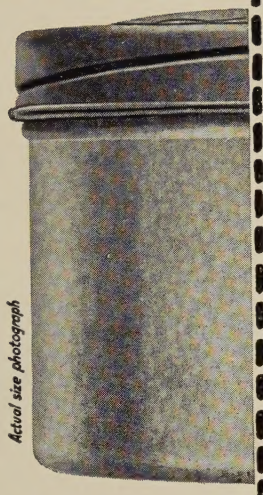

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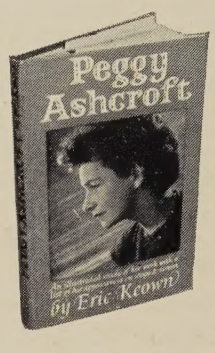

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